



# WAY OF CHOICES

BOOK 04

*Mao Ni*

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**Way of Choices**  
**(Ze Tian ji)**  
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# Synopsis

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To pick is to choose. This is a story about choices. Three thousand worlds full of gods and demons, with a daoist scroll in your hand, you are able to control the entire universe...

At the beginning of time, a mystical meteor came crashing down from outer space and scattered all over the world. A piece of it landed in the Eastern Continent. There were mysterious totems carved upon the meteor. Through viewing these totems, mankind comprehended the Dao and established the Orthodoxy.

Several thousand years later, the fourteen years old orphan Chen Changsheng left his master to cure his illness and change his fate. He brought a part of a marriage vow with him to the capital, thus beginning the journey of a rising hero...

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# Chapter 301 - The Children's Conversation In The Snow And Argument

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Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong were also on the White Grass Path. Throughout the entire journey, the Yellow Paper Umbrella was always held open, regardless of whether it was raining or if the skies were clear.. By now, Xu Yourong had roughly guessed that the reason he was able to so confidently determine the Sword Pool's location and why he walked on the path that lead to the mausoleum in the stars was mostly likely related to this umbrella.

Only when dancing snowflakes began falling out of the sky did the seemingly worn-out umbrella display its most primitive function. Extremely thick snowflakes silently landed on the umbrella. The layers gradually thickened as the snow accumulated, and the White Grass Path was changing the same way. The accumulation of snow slowly rose above their ankles, making it very difficult to see the grass.

Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong both found it slightly strange. Clearly, it was just like spring a while ago, so why had it suddenly begun to snow?

The grassy plains in front of the two turned white with a speed observable with the naked eye. Only at that moment did they realise that the vegetation beside the path had long already withered, and the pools of water in the vegetation had already frozen into solid ice.

A chilly wind blew along with the snow. The Yellow Paper Umbrella could cover them from snow, but it was unable to protect

them from all of the surrounding winds. The temperature suddenly dropped, and the chill encased all of the surroundings.

Xu Yourong had lost too much blood, so she was unable to resist this kind of coldness at all, and her body began to tremble slightly. Chen Changsheng felt the trembling, and did not dare to continue on forwards. After putting her down, he took off his outer clothing and helped her put it on, before tightly pulling her cuffs and collar closed. Seeing that he was only wearing a single piece of clothing, Xu Yourong was somewhat worried, and was about to decline his kindly offer. However, afterwards, she remembered that he was a secret disciple of the Snow Mountain Sect, and he cultivated the true coldness of Black Frost.

She did not thank him. If they exchanged thanks like this, that would be the only thing they would have been saying throughout the entire journey. Softly, she said, “May the sacred light be with you.”

Chen Changsheng did not hear it clearly and asked, “What did you say?”

Xu Yourong said, “Nothing, how far until the second temple?”

Chen Changsheng calculated the time and said, “If you ignore the difference in time flow, it should be... soon.”

It indeed was soon before they saw the second sacrificial temple in the snow.

At the same time, they learnt that there were only nine hundred li left to Zhou Dufu's tomb.

The sacrificial temple in the snow and wind was very run down and abnormally cold.

There was white snow everywhere, whether it was on the eaves of the building or the stone steps in front of the temple.

As a result, the huge bloodstain on the stone steps seemed slightly breathtaking.

Xu Yourong leaned on the pillar and sat quietly with her head down. Her face was pale and she seemed extremely weak.

Chen Changsheng looked at her and stayed silent for a very long time before saying, “From now on... don’t be like this.”

The moment they entered the snowy temple, a ferret snuck in through a pile of snow on the side of the temple, and lunged to bite Chen Changsheng’s neck.

Although the word ‘ferret’ sounds very ordinary, in the world outside the Garden of Zhou, it was a word that could instill dread in even proficient cultivators of the Ethereal Opening realm. This type of monster was extremely intelligent and extremely cunning, and it also possessed patience that did not lose to a wolf’s. The most terrifying part was that its body contained an extreme type of venom; a single drop of it could poison several hundreds of

humans to death.

What was somewhat hard to understand was, although it could be said that Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong had not recovered from being heavily injured, the Qi they gave off should have been enough for an extremely intelligent monster to understand that they were not ordinary Ethereal Opening cultivators. For that matter, Nanke had already used the piece of black wood to express her own determination to the Plains of the Unsetting Sun.

However, the ferret still attacked them without any hesitation at all, as if their flesh and blood were irresistibly enticing. Just when the ferret leapt through the snow and wind and suddenly appeared, Xu Yourong, who had seemed asleep on Chen Changsheng's back, extended her hand, and transformed the ferret into a wisp of green smoke.

For that, the slight amount of true essence that she had spent a great difficulty to store up was once again completely depleted.

"From now on, don't be like what?" she looked at Chen Changsheng and asked.

Chen Changsheng thought about how to word his thoughts while building up a fire, before saying, "Don't... try to be so brave."

Xu Yourong said, "You think I'm trying to be brave?"

Chen Changsheng looked at the slowly growing embers. He could

tell that that her mood was slightly off, so he avoided the question and said, “In brief, don’t act however you please in the future.”

Before the ferret had attacked, he had already drawn his dagger. However, he was just not as fast as Xu Yourong.

Xu Yourong did not say anything.

The reason why she had expended her true essence without hesitation and rushed to act was because she felt that it was her own responsibility.

It was obvious that the ferret had only gone crazy because it had smelled the remaining true blood of the Heavenly Phoenix in her body.

Chen Changsheng did not say anything either.

The reason why he said those words to her was because he had a guilty conscience, and felt that it was his own responsibility.

It was obvious that the ferret had only gone crazy because it had smelled the blood in his body.

Crackling sounds could be heard from the burning bonfire. The temple was even more run-down than the previous one. The image of a god Chen Changsheng had cut for wood had some snow on it, so it was slightly wet.

The temple fell into a deathly silence. For some reason, the two of them stayed quiet for a very long time.

Suddenly, Xu Yourong stared at him and asked, “You feel that I am trying to be brave?”

Chen Changsheng kept his head down and answered, “If you feel that that wording is unpleasant, I can change it.”

Xu Yourong stayed silent for a while before saying, “Whatever, I’ve heard those words countless times since I was young, so I’ve already gotten used to it.”

Chen Changsheng passed the roasted ferret meat to her and said while looking at her pale face, “If you’re tired, close your eyes and rest a little.”

Xu Yourong accepted the ferret meat, but did not eat immediately.

The words ‘tired’ and ‘trying to be brave’ made her remember a lot of things.

In such a weak condition, the memories were not too nice, and really had made her feel rather tired.

Since she was very young, when the blood of the Heavenly

Phoenix had awoken, she had bore the weight of countless people's hopes, and the three words 'family', 'country' and 'race' all rested on her shoulders.

How could it not be tiring? However, how could she let it go?

She placed the ferret meat down on the grass in front of her and said quietly with her head down, "Some matters just cannot be let go of. Even if I'm just pretending to be brave, I have to keep going."

Chen Changsheng looked at her, and some pity bloomed in his heart.

The girl had extremely great talent in cultivation, and she must have carried all of the hopes of the Elf race. However, the Elf race had suffered so many hardships in the past thousands of years, almost becoming extinct several times. Now, their homeland had already been occupied by the demons, and many of the powerful forces of the continent only indifferently watched from the side. Reviving the elves was easier said than done.

She carried the future of the entire race. How tiring was that?

He consoled, "Great power comes with great responsibility. Some matters indeed cannot just be put down when you don't want to do it anymore."

Actually, was he not living like that the whole time? That was the

shadow of death, and it was heavier than any other pressure. Also, it was not related to capability at all, only related to fate.

Xu Yourong stayed silent for a long time before saying, “Actually, I only know how to cultivate. I’m not good at anything else, nor do I wish to do them. Every time I think of the ardent hopes of the older generation and those extremely complicated affairs, not only do I have no confidence, I truly feel that I am useless and gutless. I have even begun to feel inferior.”

She had never told anyone this before, not to the Divine Empress or her teacher, the Holy Maiden, not to those close teenagers from the Mount Li Sword Sect or the juniors of the outer sect of the South Stream Temple, not to the fellow students of the Thirteen Divisions of Radiant Green, let alone her parents in the estate of the Divine General of the East. However, at this moment, she had told Chen Changsheng.

If it were not for the fact that she was overly weak from heavy injury, if she were not in this grassland that nobody had ever walked out of, if she were not in front of death, her pride and extraordinary will would have prevented her from saying such things. As soon as she stopped speaking, faint feelings of regret bloomed in her heart. However, the words had already left her mouth, so she did not pay any more attention to it.

Chen Changsheng thought perhaps the members of the older generation of the Elf race had treated her and raised her as the next leader, so she naturally had to understand the matters within the race. It was just that she was so intelligent, and her talent was so astonishing. Thinking about it, her capabilities must have been

extremely great, so why did she feel inferior because of these matters?

Seeing his expression, Xu Yourong was slightly puzzled and asked, “Have you never felt inferiority because of something?”

She had already begun to talk about these things; since he did not know who she was and still believed that she was Lady Chujian from the Elf race, what harm was there in asking a few extra questions?

Chen Changsheng contemplated this seriously, thinking about the past fifteen years and searching for a similar feeling. However, in the end, he could not find it at all.

He really had never felt inferior. Even when he thought about the humiliation he had gone through when he was about to withdraw the marriage contract at the Divine General of the East’s estate, he had only felt some helplessness and irritation.

“I never thought you were actually such a narcissist.”

Xu Yourong looked at him with a smile and asked, “But do you feel that you really are that perfect?”

Chen Changsheng thought how Tang Thirty-Six was the true narcissist and replied, “There is no one in the world who is perfect in every aspect.”

At that moment, he suddenly thought of someone he had never met but had heard of countless times—Qiushan Jun.

He shook his head, threw that name out of his mind and continued speaking, “However, not being perfect does not mean that you should feel inferior.”

Xu Yourong was unable to understand and said, “If you work so hard, but are still unable to win against the opponent, won’t you feel shame?”

Chen Changsheng asked in confusion, “Why would you feel shame?”

Xu Yourong said, “Doesn’t that mean you don’t know shame?”

Chen Changsheng was slightly taken aback; he had never thought that this lady was actually such a person. He asked, “Are you crazy?”

The crackling of the bonfire had already stopped. It was very quiet in the temple, and only the sound of the snow and wind outside could be heard, as well as the sound of Xu Yourong’s breathing gradually growing heavier.

She was slightly angry. She had enough reason to be angry.

Since she was young, from the capital to the Holy Maiden Peak, no one had ever dared to speak loudly to her, let alone use such

criticizing words to teach her a lesson, including the Divine Empress and her teacher, the Holy Maiden. That was until this moment, in this run-down temple in the wind and snow, when this young man had said: Are you crazy?

She even doubted whether she had heard it correctly or not, but she knew she had not misheard.

As a result, she looked at Chen Changsheng. She asked while struggling to keep her composure, “Do you want to die?”

## Chapter 302 - Questions In The Breeze

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Right now, Xu Yourong had already exhausted all of her blood and true essence, and was extremely weak. Right now, she would be unable to battle or even walk. As a result, not only did her challenge of “Do you want to die?” lack the intended feeling of pride, nobility and dominance, it instead was somewhat ridiculous. Indeed, Chen Changsheng even found this kind of ridiculousness somewhat endearing.

He laughed, “If you aren’t crazy, how would you have such absurd thoughts?”

Xu Yourong used great effort to control her mood and said, “How is it absurd?”

Chen Changsheng said, “As I said, there is no perfect being in the world at all. Just being imperfect and being worse than others can cause a feeling of inferiority—is that not absurd? The Pope’s ability in maintaining bonsais is not as good as the gardeners in the Hundred Herb Garden, so should he feel ashamed? The Divine Empress’s needlework is not as great as the needlework of the female workers in Wenshui City, so should she also feel ashamed?”

Xu Yourong slightly raised an eyebrow and said, “What I was talking about was the attitude towards life. Only with such an attitude can you become even more perfect.”

Chen Changsheng shook his head. “I am not saying that you should not adopt this type of attitude. It is just that, if you really

think this way, have you never considered that nobody can be perfect before reaching the final moment of their lives, even if they constantly try their best? Since victory or defeat has not even been determined, why must we feel ashamed beforehand?"

"As for inferiority, that is even more impossible." He pulled out a just-cooked tuber from the fire and passed it to her, exchanging for her ferret meat that had gone slightly cold. He continued, "Not being able to do it now does not mean that you are unable to do it in the future, and even if it is not done, what of it? Working hard should be caused by your inner desire, and should not come from the disparity from comparing yourself with others. As long as you really try hard, it is enough."

Xu Yourong stayed silent. It was not known what she was thinking of.

Chen Changsheng spoke again, "I think that you should think it through. The hopes of other people on us are not important at all; what is actually important is what we hope ourselves to do. Aren't people supposed to live for themselves?"

Xu Yourong raised her head and glanced at him.

Chen Changsheng understood what she meant and said, "The responsibilities we should shoulder obviously should be shouldered, but when living, we should live for ourselves. Also, the latter should occur before the former."

Xu Yourong thought about it and said, "I am unable to

understand.”

Chen Changsheng thought a little and said while laughing, “I am only speaking casually.”

Through this conversation, he discovered that this girl was like a hedgehog in the forest, defending against something at all times. It was easy to injure the flowers and plants, as well as the helping hands, and it was also easy to injure herself. Under her calm, unhurried, indifferent and strong outward appearance, she was actually so sensitive and tenuous.

Before when he mentioned perfection, he was just speaking in her words. In reality, he had never even thought about it. He felt that her way of thinking was very weird, which was why he felt that she had an illness—just what ordinary person would set perfection as the aim of existence? Once realising that it was impossible to reach complete perfection, would they not fall into depression and self-deprecation?

“What you say sounds somewhat reasonable, which perhaps can cause life to become slightly less complicated, but...”

Xu Yourong hesitated a little, and then asked for guidance, “The education that I have received since childhood makes me unable to accept your point of view. How should I face up against this type of pressure?”

Chen Changsheng pointed towards the tuber in her hand, and said, “Eat first while it’s warm. We can talk casually.”

Xu Yourong listened to what he said and tore open the slightly burnt outer skin of the tuber. A faint fragrance spread out.

Chen Changsheng said, “Firstly, we need to know what we want to do the most; the reason why we live.”

Looking at her expression, he said hurriedly, “Don’t say the word ‘perfection’ again—using perfection to describe the level is not concrete.”

Xu Yourong thought about it and said, “What I want to do most is cultivate.”

“Then cultivate,” he said.

Xu Yourong felt slightly unhappy, thinking, was he not fooling with people?

Chen Changsheng explained, “Other than cultivate, you don’t want to do anything else.”

Xu Yourong said, “But those things still exist.”

Chen Changsheng said, “Close your eyes and the sky goes dark. If you can’t see the world, the world doesn’t exist.”

Xu Yourong said, “That is only speaking idealistically. How can it

persuade people? Also, cultivation is only a method, and not a purpose.”

Chen Changsheng looked at her, and thought about everything he saw and heard on the journey. He said, “If I am not wrong, your purpose for cultivation should be... in order to become stronger?”

Xu Yourong said, “Only with enough strength can you shoulder the responsibilities you should shoulder.”

Chen Changsheng said somewhat impatiently, “Can we forget the word ‘responsibility’ for a moment?”

Xu Yourong said sternly, “I wouldn’t possibly dare to overlook this for even a moment.”

Chen Changsheng thought seriously and then said, “Then I recommend that before you become the strongest person, temporarily forget this goal, and put all your energy into the method, cultivation.”

Xu Yourong said, “Without an objective, how am I able to advance without worry?”

Chen Changsheng said, “This proves that your objective is not resolute enough. It should be immovable. If that objective has already been deeply embedded in your will and blood, is there a need to constantly remind yourself?”

Xu Yourong thought and said, “Reasonable... then what is your objective in cultivation? Have you perhaps already forgotten it?”

“Of course I haven’t forgotten it.” Chen Changsheng went silent for a while before saying, “I pursue longevity.”

His cultivation was following his heart, and he pursued the Dao of longevity.

“What are the benefits in doing so?” Xu Yourong asked.

Chen Changsheng understood that her meaning was different from what she had asked. She was not asking for the benefits of longevity.

Towards such a way of handling things, only he in the world could understand where the specific benefits were the best, because the objective he pursued itself was a type of great pressure —the shadow of death always loomed over the end of his path of cultivation, waiting for him, and getting closer and closer. If he did not learn to forget about this, perhaps he would have become a madman from this type of extremely terrifying pressure long ago.

Why did he always follow his heart even from the old temple in Xining Village? It was because if he did not follow his heart, he was unable to live normally at all. How could he follow his heart so smoothly and unhindered in such a terrifying pressure? Only by forgetting it. However, he remembered his original thought, which was to live instinctively. Only this way could there be peace and happiness.

He constantly spoke, speaking very peacefully. He did not speak hurriedly, and what he meant was very clear. No matter how wild the snow and wind outside the temple was, it was unable to suppress him.

The door of the run-down temple was long broken, and the cold wind mixed with bits of snow drifting in. Some of it landed on his face, just as the firelight was doing.

The cold wind and the warm firelight fused together and formed a breeze.

Xu Yourong listened very diligently while looking at his face. Her eyes grew brighter and brighter.

The young man seemed to have experienced all of the affairs of the world, however, he was not dark and gloomy, and remained full of vitality. He was just like a gust of breeze, causing people to feel extremely comfortable.

# Chapter 303 - Passing Through The Four Seasons, Thus Seeing The Mausoleum

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Xu Yourong did not understand. She thought to herself, you're in your twenties at most. You can't be older than me by much. So how is it that you can understand life so well? Moreover... for you to actually use such simple words to clearly explain such complex subjects, just how did the Snow Mountain Sect teach you? Just what was your everyday life like?

She said, "I've never met anyone as good with words as you."

Chen Changsheng was a little startled by these words. He had never imagined that he would ever receive such an evaluation. Since he was small, he had lived together with Senior Yu Ren and rarely spoke. For the most part, they had used hand signs to communicate. In the capital, he had been regarded by many people as silent and reticent. So when did he begin to talk so much? When he had to give Luoluo and Xuanyuan Po lessons in the Orthodox Academy? Or was it because Tang Thirty-Six, that wealthy princeling who made his head hurt, spent every day over the past year prattling on and on by his ear? Or perhaps... it had something to do with the person across from him?

As he gazed at this girl's elegant face by the light of the fire, for some reason, he began to feel flustered, and then he said somewhat distractedly, "It's all just random musings."

Xu Yourong sincerely asked him, "How do you understand all these matters?"

Chen Changsheng thought to himself, that's because ever since you were a child, you grew up in the grasslands, separated from the world, so there was no one tell you these things.

Xu Yourong said, "To explain so clearly about responsibility and pressure and life, I could waste a day and night in self-reflection and not do this. You are truly amazing."

Chen Changsheng honestly replied, "It's really not much. It's just that something like pressure often brings on negative emotions. That's not good for your health, so I don't like it."

Once the snowstorm stopped, the two departed the sacrificial temple and continued onward.

Suddenly, they walked into a torrential downpour.

Before they even had time to think about getting away from the rain, it stopped.

The sun once again blazed over the plains, causing the rainwater to instantly evaporate. In the humid atmosphere, it seemed as if it was now summer.

As they continued forward, the grass yellowed and became covered with white frost. The White Grass Path gradually began to blend into the surrounding plain. It was a bleak scene, as if it was autumn.

The plains of the Garden of Zhou were as enigmatic as expected. Maybe it was because space was twisted, or perhaps it was because time flowed strangely, but the four seasons alternated with each other rapidly, catching them unaware. At the most ridiculous point, they had walked through spring into summer and from autumn into winter in the short span of only dozen or so li!

Although the surroundings were harsh, they could at the very least determine one thing. The thing that most comforted them and simultaneously most set them on edge was that they had not encountered a single monster.

Running out of a cloudy and rainy summer, Chen Changsheng placed Xu Yourong down on a brilliant patch of spring flowers. Then he took out a big piece of pure white snow that he had taken from the winter as well as some implements that he had taken from the last two temples. He began to thaw the snow and boil it into water. At the same time, he began to pluck and disembowel the autumn goose he had caught this morning and began to prepare a water chestnut stew with goose meat.

The stew's aroma gradually began to pervade the air, but the plains on both sides of the path were quiet and without sound.

This sort of strange and deathly silence had once made them extremely vigilant, but now they had learned to ignore it.

He was even more concerned about the time. Based on the scale of the flowing water bottle, they had already been in the Garden of

Zhou for over twenty days. The Garden of Zhou would only remain open for one hundred days. When it closed, the rules of the miniature world within would undergo a single change. The monsters and fish living within would have no problems, but the cultivators possessing seas of consciousness would be struck dead by heavenly lightning.

He did not know what the situation was outside the Garden of Zhou. Logically, the garden gate's closing should have drawn the attention of the people outside. Archbishop Mei Lisha and the Solitary Drunk under the Moon should have had some sort of response. It was just he did not know if they had managed to open the gate. As for those several hundred human cultivators that had been gathered together, would they leave those gardens and search the wilderness for their companions?

Of course, he had not much faith in the latter occurring.

"The deeper we go into the plain, the slower time gets. At our location, one day is roughly equivalent to fifteen minutes on the outside, so for the moment, you don't have to worry about the closing of the Garden of Zhou." In the past few days, whenever Xu Yourong was awake, she was performing calculations with her Fated Star Plate. Using the minute differences between their two flowing water bottles, and the speed of that sun that wanted to set but never ended up doing so, she had found a relatively accurate answer.

When she said these words, she was on Chen Changsheng's back, one hand holding a flowing water bottle as she examined it, while the other held onto his shoulder. Naturally, she was lying

completely against Chen Changsheng's back.

By now, they had grown very familiar with each other, and their interactions had also grown much more casual. Her hugging his body had already become extremely natural, not as it was initially. Even when she was weak and without the strength to support herself, her two hands would still be holding onto his shoulders. She kept her body extremely close to his. It was truly exhausting.

Chen Changsheng was also no longer as cautious and prudent as he was at the beginning. He used whatever position he found most comfortable to hold up her legs and no longer worried about whether he had gone too high.

At the same time, her casualness made him feel even more comfortable. To feel her soft body on his back on this endless and seemingly never-ending journey gave him much more strength.

Although he felt the soft touch of her body, it would be embarrassing for him to imagine her body, so he naturally came to a conclusion: the legends were right, elven girls truly are enchanting.

When he thought about how her injuries had not yet recovered while he was thinking about such things, he felt rather ashamed. Perhaps because he wanted to dispel his shame, he asked, "Later on...is it okay to call you [Ruanruan](#)?"

(TN: Ruan(软) means soft)

This was still to not have anything so finding something to say.

Moreover, this was a most idiotic and disastrous example. The moment the words left his lips, he immediately felt regret.

Throughout this journey, he had known perfectly well that she was a pure and cold young lady, carrying a dignified air about her. She would definitely not find this sort of teasing very amusing.

Of course, Xu Yourong did not like it. If this were a normal day, she would have gotten furious, and then beat Chen Changsheng into such a state that not even Luoluo would recognize him.

Yet for some reason, although right now her face was filled with anger, she did not say or do anything.

Through spring flowers, summer rains, autumn fruits, and winter snows; they passed through the four seasons and continued onwards. Occasionally, they would rest, killing a monster for a meal, reorienting their minds, and then they would always be able to find another old temple. They grew increasingly familiar with each other. Even when they were not talking and just calmly gazing at each other, they did not find it awkward. There were even times where he would make a funny face, causing the weak her to chuckle.

Of course, when they were resting and waiting for the meat to cook, they would often engage in conversation. In addition, Xu Yourong would often take the initiative by requesting that he talk about some topic. Since she was small, she had become the famous person on the continent, the focus of countless gazes. Whenever she went out, she would be guarded by countless experts. But she was alone. In Xining Village, he only had his senior as a

companion. After he came to the capital, he had grown used to the tranquility of the Orthodox Academy, but he was never alone. He could feel her loneliness, so every time she wanted to hear something, he would always talk about it, digressing on a vast number of random topics. For instance, he would say that a certain type of fish was tasty and not poisonous. Or that, when the stream water is clearest, you can see more than a dozen zhang down to the bottom of the pool. Or he would talk about how over there is a type of pigfish that was extremely delicious if you took out its toxic sac. Or even that those pine trees on the mountain really look similar to monsters.

Occasionally, she would also talk. She would describe which auntie in that small village loved to curse in the street, or which restaurant made the best food. He did not quite understand, but he guessed that it was most likely the place she grew up in. Only because she was getting weaker, and because she felt that no matter how dazzling her life was in the eyes of others, it could only seem dry and tedious in comparison to Chen Changsheng's life, she began feeling inferior and did not like to talk about it too much.

She was really thankful that Chen Changsheng was willing to talk with such a dull person as her.

On a certain day in which a snowstorm was once again raging, they were resting in the seventh old temple on the White Grass Path.

By the bonfire, Chen Changsheng concluded his reminiscing of his childhood memories.

She looked at him sincerely and said, "You really are a good person."

Chen Changsheng thought to himself that this evaluation wasn't bad.

She whispered her blessing, "May the sacred light be with you."

Since that rainy night in the old temple where they held their first actual conversation, dozens of days had passed.

May the sacred light be with you.

Every day, she would say this prayer.

They were getting ever closer to Zhou Dufu's mausoleum, and she was getting ever weaker.

Relying on the Black Dragon's Black Frost coldness, Chen Changsheng's injuries had been slowly recovering, but there was no such good turn of things for her. The Peacock Plume continued to spread through her body and gradually began to wreak havoc upon it. She had lost too much of her Heavenly Phoenix true blood and was powerless to stop the poison. Several times, Chen Changsheng had ventured into the plains and hunted down several monsters, but the blood of those monsters, whether it had a fiery or cold nature, had not done a single thing to ameliorate her situation.

Her hands held tightly onto his clothes, and she calmly leaned against the pile of grass, watching the flames leap about the fire while saying no more.

The snowy temple was silent. Even the wind had stopped.

Gazing at her pale face, at those eyes in which that emblematic water had gradually begun to dry up, Chen Changsheng felt very sad.

It was a sadness that he had begun to feel ahead of time.

He wanted to say something, to shatter this oppressive and deathly silence, but he did not know what to say.

Seeing his bowed head, Xu Yourong knew what he was thinking about. She calmly said, "It has nothing to do with you."

Chen Changsheng lifted his head and looked at her. "Although, even until now, you've never been willing to tell me what happened on that first night, I definitely know that it was you who saved me. Moreover, you've never once thrown me away."

"Xu Yourong gazed calmly at him and replied, "You were the same."

Chen Changsheng said, "I suddenly understand those words you spoke of that night. If I was strong enough, as strong as you were before you were injured, when faced by those demon experts, I

could still have brought you away. I wouldn't have been forced by circumstance into these plains and walked this path of no return."

Xu Yourong said, "Contrarily, I believe that it was the words you said on that night that make sense. If I wasn't trying to be brave, then perhaps I wouldn't have even been injured."

This was what she truly thought about this matter. When she had first caught onto the trail of the demons, if she had not traversed that mountain path alone due to her pride, maybe things would be different. If she had chosen instead to join hands with the other human cultivators, like the youths of the Mount Li Sword Sect with whom she was acquainted, or even that fool called Chen Changsheng, maybe none of this would have happened.

The snowy temple once more grew quiet, so quiet as to stir unease within the heart.

Chen Changsheng did not like this sort of silence. When she thought of that prayer she recited, he asked, "Is this the practice of your people?"

Xu Yourong thought to herself that the Snow Mountain Sect isn't that remote, and he's so well-versed in the Daoist scriptures, but somehow he doesn't even know this.

"Yes, it means to wish you a peaceful life."

"Thank you."

"I also thank you."

Xu Yourong grew weaker by the day, but she had never forgotten to say those words.

Those were her heartfelt blessings and hopes.

She knew that it would probably be very difficult for them to leave these plains. Then if there was still a possibility of living, she wanted to give it all to this good-hearted disciple from the Snow Mountain Sect.

Just when it seemed like her fifteen years of life were about reach their end, the White Grass Path ended.

Just when her eyes were about to close, she finally saw that mausoleum.

She was on Chen Changsheng's back and was a bit higher up than he was, so she saw it an instant before he did.

From a distance, the mausoleum seemed like a mountain. There were no cliffs and few trees on this mountain, making it so that those straight lines that ran from the peak to the foot of the mausoleum could be clearly seen.

Chen Changsheng thought they felt rather familiar. When he got

even closer, he realized that they seemed very similar to the Heavenly Tome Monoliths.

They had walked through the plains for dozens of days, and now they had finally found the legendary Mausoleum of Zhou. However, he and Xu Yourong were extremely exhausted, so they could not show any happiness or anxiety.

Following the White Grass Path, it still took a long time for them to walk the dozen or so li and finally arrive before the gray mausoleum.

They could finally estimate just how tall and just how large this mausoleum truly was.

Now that they were up close, they could more clearly make out the details of the mausoleum, and its loftiness seemed more real. For instance, the several thousand zhang divine path which led straight down the center towards the wall of the mausoleum, or the massive stones that it was made of. Compared to seeing it from a distance, its grandeur suddenly seemed many times more imposing, and they were struck head-on by a dignified and solemn sensation.

Chen Changsheng noticed that around the mausoleum were ten stone pillars. These stone pillars were about a zhang tall, their carvings long eroded into blurry drawings by several hundred years of wind and rain. They seemed very shabby. Compared to the grandiose mausoleum, these stone pillars were rather strange. It was not for any other reason except that they were too short. They did not match with the mausoleum.

"You may not know, but the Li Palace also has a lot of stone pillars outside it. The first time I saw them, I thought they were very strange. I didn't think that there would also be some here."

He continued, "I don't know why, but I also think that this mausoleum is very strange. It seems just like a Heavenly Tome Monolith, but there's something different."

Xu Yourong weakly chuckled as she thought to herself, when I was three years old, I would climb those pillars every day for fun.

Resting against his shoulder, she strenuously lifted her head to glance at the mausoleum. A little perplexed, she said, "The style of the mausoleum hall is very similar to the Longevity Sect's Golden Hall."

"Right, that's the problem," Chen Changsheng said. "This mausoleum seems very similar to a lot of the famous buildings outside of the Garden of Zhou, but when put all together in one place, it feels a little..."

Xu Yourong said at the same as he did, "...inappropriate."

After they said this word, they looked into each other's eyes and laughed.

To the legendary and supreme figure that was Zhou Dufu, there was no one that would not be incomparably reverential. In front of

his mausoleum, presumably they wouldn't even dare to speak loudly, much less deliver such a commentary.

If it were any other cultivator that came before Zhou Dufu's mausoleum, not to mention being so excited that they could not control themselves, they would even cry tears of joy. They would be shocked into silence, and maybe only shouting and screaming could give vent to the excitement in their hearts.

But Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong did not. They were very calm, as though they could not care less.

The instant they rather irreverently said that word, the entire journey's worth of exhaustion and hardships seemingly disappeared without a trace.

# Chapter 304 - That Man's Mausoleum

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Xu Yourong and Chen Changsheng were purposely irreverent.

This did not mean that they were actually calm. It was actually that the amount of indifference they showed was the only way for them to calm down in the shortest amount of time.

On Xu Yourong's face was a smile of satisfaction and peace. She had finally seen the legendary mausoleum before her death, approaching the true secret of the Garden of Zhou. Of course she would be happy.

Chen Changsheng glanced at the Yellow Paper Umbrella several times, and confirmed that there was no more activity. The sword intent had already disappeared when he saw the mausoleum. He did not know what it meant.

Did that sword intent already finish its job of leading the way? Was the Sword Pool close to the mausoleum? The surroundings of the mausoleum were endless plain of white, and over ten li away in the opposite direction, a few old temples could be seen. They were not sacrificial temples, and should have been matching temples. There were no lakes or pools, so where was the Sword Pool?

Chen Changsheng did not think for too long, and walked towards the mausoleum with Xu Yourong on his back. Not long after, they arrived in front of the long path made out of stone that seemed like a path to heaven.

When he stepped onto the stone path, some dust arose from the bottom of his shoes. For some reason, he slowly began to increase in speed, until the end where he actually began to run.

Xu Yourong hung onto his neck and thought with a smile. After all, he was a young man in his twenties, so no matter how calm and unhurried he seemed, it was always an act. Fair enough, the Snow Mountain Sect was known for the bloodline of the Black Frost Dragon, and such dragons were renowned for loving treasure. This mausoleum must definitely have countless treasures, so why would he not hurry?

Chen Changsheng's injuries had slowly healed. Although he was still tired, his speed was very fast. Not long after, he reached the end of the divine path of several thousand zhang in length with Xu Yourong on his back, arriving in the center of the huge mausoleum. Looking at the heavy stone door of over ten zhang in front of him, he exhaled, and then pushed forwards with both his hands. He discovered that it was easier than he had thought.

Without a sound, the door of the mausoleum opened. Soft dust and gravel flew out from the crack that grew wider and wider,

Chen Changsheng pulled out the dagger, and wielded it in front of him. He walked into the mausoleum, remaining very alert.

Xu Yourong leaned on his shoulder, and her expression was also solemn. Her fingers constantly extended and retracted, silently making calculations.

This mausoleum could be called the most mysterious place in the Eastern Continent. Buried inside was the man that once caused the entire world to fear.

Now, they naturally already knew that the mysterious Plains of the Unsetting Sun was only the garden of this mausoleum.

Even the mausoleum garden was so vast and dangerous; the mausoleum itself would undoubtedly be more so.

Nobody knew what was inside the mausoleum.

As soon as he walked in, after just a few steps, a smear of light suddenly glowed in the distant darkness. It was like someone had lit a bonfire in the wilderness on a starless night.

Chen Changsheng stared into the distance. He was ready to fight or run away at any time.

In the next moment, a second smear of light flared in the depths of the mausoleum. More and more radiance continued to appear, spreading towards them. It transformed into two bright lines of light.

Finally, the radiance arrived in front of him. As it turned out, the luminous pearls mounted on the walls of the passageway had turned on.

The luminous pearls were perfectly round, translucent and

transparent. Each one was the size of a bowl.

The luminous pearls were not as pretty as the one he had received from Luoluo, but they definitely were not smaller than the ones on the Dew Platform. Also, this passageway was very long, leading into the depths of the mausoleum. The number of luminous pearls on the wall would have reached at least in the thousands, which really was hard to believe. Back then, when Zhou Dufu built the mausoleum for himself, where did he find so many luminous pearls that were almost completely the same?

Under the soft light of the luminous pearls, Chen Changsheng carried Xu Yourong into the depths of the mausoleum.

The passageway that led into the depths of the mausoleum should have been the nether path specially built for emperors, which symbolized the meaning of leading into the Netherworld. Of course, in the Daoist Canons of the Orthodoxy, the passageway was commonly known as the path of radiance, which symbolised the meaning of leading into the Divine Kingdom of Infinite Radiance within the sea of stars. Just like how the pointless stone path of several thousand zhang in length outside the mausoleum was known as the divine path. They carried similar meanings.

Walking in the long passageway, only the echoes of footsteps could be heard. Although the luminous pearls illuminated the way, it still seemed rather gloomy and scary.

Chen Changsheng suddenly felt a vague chill spread from within his heart. Sending in a sliver of spiritual sense, he discovered that in the cold lake within the Ethereal Palace, the Black Dragon

seemed to show signs of waking up. He could not help but stare blankly for a moment, curling the corner of his mouth for a smile. He thought it no wonder, as it was the legendary Black Frost Dragon that loved treasures—even in sleep, it could feel the existence of these luminous pearls.

Xu Yourong saw his face suddenly reveal a smile. She was very confused, and felt that it was slightly weird, so she asked softly.

Chen Changsheng did not know how to explain, so he could only smile. He seemed a little dumb.

Surpassing both of their expectations, there were no traps in the passageway, nor did they meet any fierce beasts that guarded the mausoleum. Very soon, they reached the deepest part of the mausoleum, with nothing occurring at all.

At the end of the path of radiance was another stone door.

When Chen Changsheng placed his hand onto it, he very naturally thought of when he was first trapped within the Tong Palace on the night of the Ivy Festival. He thought of the image when he reached the bottom of Black Dragon Pond, and when he pushed open the stone door. At that time, he carried a thought that he would definitely die when he opened the stone door, but he had never thought that behind the stone door, he would meet the Black Dragon, which had already saved his life several times since they had met.

What would he meet this time upon pushing open the stone

door?

With an extremely soft grinding sound, the stone door was slowly pushed open.

The stone door had not been opened for several hundreds of years.

Behind the door was a world where no one had visited for hundreds of years.

Stone pillars of several dozen zhang in height held up the dome.

The space seemed incomparably huge.

As it turned out, in the depths of the mausoleum, there was not a coffin chamber, but rather a palace.

In the deepest part of the palace was a black stone coffin.

Chen Changsheng approached the black stone coffin with Xu Yourong on his back. Only then did he discover that the black stone coffin was extremely huge, like a black mountain.

Standing in front of the black coffin, the two of them seemed very insignificant.

The stone coffin was made out of obsidian. Its surface was dull and without lustre, giving out a deep and solemn feeling. There were no visible cracks or signs of being pieced together, making it extremely possible that it was entirely made of a single piece of obsidian.

Chen Changsheng thought silently, was this perhaps really a black mountain?

There was no patterning on the surface of the obsidian coffin, and it did not have any words that identified the owner. However, because of that, it seemed even more solemn.

The man who currently laid within the obsidian coffin quietly did not need any sort of patterning to add splendour, and did not need any words to sing the praise of his deeds.

When this man was a teenager, he was once known as the supreme expert of River Luo.

Later, when he dealt Emperor Taizong a heavy defeat outside of Luoyang City, he was known as the supreme expert of the Central Plains.

Next, he travelled to the south, successively defeating countless experts from the Longevity Sect and the Scholartree Manor. He flattened the mountain gate of the South Stream Temple, and ripped off the veil of the current Holy Maiden. After that, he was known as the supreme expert of the Human race.

Afterwards, he stood amidst the countless demon experts, heavily injured the Demon Lord and then travelled far away. As a result, he was known as the supreme expert of the continent.

The supreme expert of the continent mentioned here did not even have a limitation of time. It was not limited to that age, and instead, whether looking forwards five hundred years or looking back five hundred years, he was always the strongest without equal.

As a result, he gained another title, the Thousand Year Supreme Expert.

He had peerless strength within the universe. Perhaps it was this type of loneliness that had caused him to disappear, leaving behind an irreplicable legend.

In the end, he was known by the people as the supreme expert under the stars.

He used an entire obsidian mountain to make a coffin. He used a grassland that had a sun that did not set as his mausoleum garden. He used a world as a mound to bury himself. How would he need a gravestone, or engrave his name on a gravestone?

He was Zhou Dufu.

He could only be Zhou Dufu.

Standing before the huge coffin of obsidian, Chen Changsheng stayed silent for a while, and gave a plain bow. Afterwards, he continued onwards carrying Xu Yourong on his back, and did not stay for any longer.

Xu Yourong was unable to understand why he was so calm and said, “You should know who is inside the black stone coffin.”

Chen Changsheng spoke as if he was reciting from memory, “The supreme expert under the stars, the undefeatable legend, the person who swore brotherhood with Emperor Taizong of the Zhou Dynasty.”

“If it is only power, it is not enough for him to be remembered by the people for so long.”

Xu Yourong said, “For the Human race to be victorious over the Demon race, there is actually a reason of utmost importance, which is always forgotten purposely by the annals of history and the people. That is, Zhou Dufu defeated and heavily injured the Demon Lord.”

Chen Changsheng did not stop his footsteps, and instead walked faster. He said, “I know that, and also understand the importance of it.”

“So, other than that he is a legend, he is even more a hero,” Xu Yourong said. “An overwhelming majority of the cultivators of the younger generation that I have met view him as an idol, feverishly admiring him. If they could arrive before the coffin of Zhou Dufu,

they will definitely earnestly kneel and worship, unlike how indifferent you were.”

“If it were some other time, I would probably also do so.” Chen Changsheng said, “But right now, we have no time to dwell on the past. After all, he is already dead.”

Xu Yourong asked, “So?”

Chen Changsheng said, “No matter how heroic, no matter how legendary, it is impossible to wake up after being dead, unable to tell us how to continue living. Our current situation is very bad, and if we grieve for the senior at this time, then we will very soon become the target of grieving. Of course, it is even more possible that we will be forgotten by people very quickly.”

Saying that, he had already arrived before the steps at the back of the palace. In front of him was a door. The ground in front of the door was covered by a thin layer of dust, and it did not seem to have any marks at all, not even the marks of wind. Judging by it, the mausoleum truly had not been opened before, let alone had people enter it. They were its first visitors.

Just like the main door of the mausoleum, the doors of this stone room did not have locks.

Upon entering into the first stone room, they were assaulted by a putrid gust of a rotting smell, causing them to hold their breath, squint their eyes and use the light that spilled from behind them to gaze into the room. They only saw that within the stone room,

there were many rotting shelves made of wood, and on the shelves were at least a hundred magical artifacts. They were scattered messily everywhere, and judging by their shape, the\ magical artifacts were definitely out of the ordinary. It was just that they were left lying idle for too long, and the Qi of the magical artifacts had already scattered. They were no different from scrap metal.

Suddenly, Xu Yourong called out quietly in surprise.

Chen Changsheng followed her gaze, and only saw that in the rotten wood closest to the corner, there seemed to be something there.

# Chapter 305 - The Treasures Which He Searched Through

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Zhou Dufu's mausoleum naturally did not use any ordinary materials. The wooden racks that displayed magical artifacts should have been made of the extremely expensive Five Flowers Pearwood. Only it was very obvious that the number one expert under the stars was not knowledgeable in antiques. He only knew that the Five Flowers Pearwood was extremely precious and rare and was highly durable against moths and worms. Yet he did not know that this hardwood required a moist environment to preserve its properties. In the cold and dry environment of this mausoleum chamber, it only required a few decades for it to rot. In perfect condition, the rotted logs in the corner of the stone chamber could have been sold at a sky-high price, but now they were only a worthless pile of rotten logs.

What could cause such a knowledgeable and experienced young genius like Xu Yourong to give a cry of surprise was obviously not those rotten pieces of wood, but the items buried within them.

Chen Changsheng walked over and used a ruler-like magical artifact to pry apart that pile of wood. He realized that buried within was yet another magical artifact. That magical artifact had a black color, and he couldn't tell what it was made of. When he felt it, it seemed incomparably sleek. It seemed very similar to a fossil of some type of peculiar tree found on the western seaside.

"What's this?" he asked, handing that black magical artifact to Xu Yourong.

Xu Yourong took it and carefully examined it for a long time, slowly tracing her fingers over it. Finally, she said, "If I'm not wrong, this should be White Emperor City's Soul Pivot."

Chen Changsheng was somewhat surprised. He had never encountered this name in any of the three thousand Daoist scriptures, so he asked, "Soul Pivot?"

Xu Yourong gave back that black magical artifact, using her eyes to indicate that he should take good care of it. "Yes, this Soul Pivot possesses an unimaginable magic power, the ability to command monsters. Even those legendary and outrageous monsters who are on the verge of stepping into the Saint realm have no means of resisting the Soul Pivot's command. The reason the White Emperor clan has been able to rule over the monster realm for so many years is for the most part because of this. Of course, this is also their greatest secret. Besides the White Emperor's bloodline, very few outsiders know of it. If I hadn't seen a picture of it at my predecessor's place, even I would not have recognized it."

After a pausing for a moment, she continued, "I didn't think that this precious treasure of the demi-humans had actually been snatched away from White Emperor City by Zhou Dufu and then put to use in this Garden of Zhou. The reason why those monsters in the plain are unwilling to approach this mausoleum and instead have silently protected it for several hundred years is most likely because of this Soul Pivot."

Chen Changsheng had not imagined that this magical artifact would be so important. He resolutely stored it away.

Logically and in accordance with his normal temperament, he would have discussed with Xu Yourong how to divide the treasures they found in this mausoleum, but he was in a rush to find certain items and had no time for such matters. Moreover, the important point was that since the Soul Pivot originally belonged to the White Emperor clan, he believed that it was only right to return it to Luoluo.

Xu Yourong took in all his actions with her eyes, but she did nothing. The mutual understanding and trust they had built up over the course of this journey had made it very difficult for any misunderstanding to come up between them. On the contrary, she even gave him a word of advice. "According to that painting, the Soul Pivot requires the Soul Wood to display its full power, but the Soul Wood isn't here."

Chen Changsheng took that old iron ruler magical artifact and rummaged through the pile of wood. Xu Yourong would give an explanation of the magical artifacts he found, and only then did Chen Changsheng realize that these magical artifacts that seemed like a pile of scrap metal were all famous. There were even three magical artifacts that had been placed on the Pavilion of Divination's Tier of Legendary Weapons.

The magical artifacts did not cause his footsteps to pause. Seeing that the stone chamber did not have the things he was looking for, he immediately turned and left. He went to the second stone chamber on his right. Only as he moved did he finally find the time to say to Xu Yourong, "Everything that we find, we can divide evenly."

Leaning on his shoulder, Xu Yourong lightly chuckled and said, "If we can get out, that is."

The items in the second stone chamber had not rotted away. Although the items were not the most precious things in the world, they were something that was loved by everyone in the world. Even if some refined scholars would often criticize these things as being vulgar, even describing them as mud or dirt, upon being confronted with this scene, they would also shake all over with excitement, barely restraining themselves.

It was a room filled with gold. Even after several hundred years, it still sparkled with a dazzling light, causing anyone that looked at it to squint their eyes, as if this was the only way to avoid being burned by the light.

Xu Yourong was stunned into silence. She thought to herself, when Zhou Dufu crisscrossed the continent, just how many clans did he rob and how many families did he destroy? Chen Changsheng was much calmer—not because his cultivation had reached such heights that he could regard wealth as transient clouds, but because in the Imperial Palace of Zhou, in that cold underground space, he had seen much more gold.

Once people have experienced something, people would naturally find it hard to get excited when experiencing it once more, but this did not mean that Chen Changsheng was not interested in this chamber filled with gold.

Previously when he had determined that this mausoleum held no dangers, he had returned his dagger to its sheath. Now he removed

the dagger along with its sheath from his belt, and began to point.

The noble scholars say that even the unbending stone must bow its head, but he was not pointing at the gold to open his mind and comprehend the Dao. Stone could be turned into gold, but he was not planning to turn this gold back into stone. He was unconcerned with allowing those who came later to comprehend the truth of the myriad things returning to one, letting them embrace this simple and unchanging principle. What he wanted to do was take all this gold without missing a single bar.

If that Black Dragon were to wake up and realize that he had left even a single bar of gold behind, it would inevitably pester him to no end.

With the movement of his sheath, the gold within the chamber vanished before their eyes. Ultimately, all the gold had been transported to some unknown place.

Xu Yourong had realized that his dagger was odd long ago. It was most likely some sort of spatial magical artifact. She also had a similar magical artifact on her person. The Wu Arrows and Tong Bow as well as some underclothes were all stored within. So she was not amazed by this sight, but her curiosity was piqued. The space within this dagger seemed a bit too large. Throughout this journey, she had already seen him squeeze far too many things into that space.

Moving that room full of gold into that space did not take up too much time. Chen Changsheng very quickly brought her away into the third stone chamber.

The chamber was filled with crystals. With the passage of time, the power within these crystals had gradually scattered. Most likely, they contained only a third of their original strength, but they were still good items. Without any prompting from Xu Yourong, he repeated the scene from the second stone chamber and very quickly wiped it clean.

The fourth stone chamber was filled with various treasures.

This time Chen Changsheng worked even faster. Xu Yourong only had time to blink her eyes, not even to say anything, and those night pearls, coral, jadeite, white jade and other similar treasures had all been stored away in his sheath. It was so fast that she felt that her eyes were seeing things, that maybe this stone chamber originally did not even have anything?

The fifth stone chamber was filled with all sorts of secret cultivation manuals. Xu Yourong had originally thought that he would be more cautious so that in the course of transporting those cultivation manuals, they would not be damaged. These secret cultivation manuals once belonged to countless experts of the past, and represented Zhou Dufu's innumerable battles. They were the cultivation world's history, and their importance was beyond questioning. Yet Chen Changsheng still very quickly left the stone chamber, not pausing for a moment longer. Wherever his dagger pointed, that place became empty. In his eyes, those secret cultivation manuals were no different from worthless scrap paper.

Xu Yourong did not understand. When he entered the sixth chamber, gave it a quick glance, then turned and left, this cause

her perplexity to reach its peak.

She recalled that whether he was confronted by gold, or magical artifacts, or crystals, his eyes remained clear and bright. There was no greed or even any of the happiness that anyone would feel upon seeing such a sight. As he took away the gold, crystals and magical artifacts, it was like he did not care—as if he took it away only because he saw it. So then just what was he looking for?

"In this mausoleum, just what exactly is it that you need to find?" she asked.

Chen Changsheng did not answer, because there was no time to answer. He rushed from chamber to chamber, going faster and faster.

When they arrived at the ninth stone chamber, Xu Yourong noticed that his eyes finally lit up, that a strand of joy finally appeared within them.

This stone chamber had no shelves. There were many bottles and jars laid out haphazardly on the floor. Some of the bottles were made of celadon, while some of the jars seemed very similar to those used to simmer chicken stock. It was a good thing that those bottle and jars were not on shelves, or else they would all have been shattered on the floor.

Chen Changsheng paced in front of these bottles and jars, his fingers slowly moving across of them, his gaze extremely focused.

Suddenly, his fingers stopped, and he took up a jade box. There were no markings on this box, so she did not know what was inside of it. When the lid of the jade box was opened, an extremely light fragrance floated up. He moved his nose closer and took a sniff, and after considering for a few moments, decided that he was not wrong. The joy in his eyes traveled to the rest of his face, and his body finally relaxed.

Leaning on his back, Xu Yourong very clearly felt his two shoulders suddenly relax, no longer as tense and hard as they were before.

"What's this?" she asked.

"This is a fireflow pill."

Chen Changsheng took a pill from out of the box and explained, "The primary ingredient is the juice of the fire thorn, which has an extremely powerful fire characteristic, ranked third in the world. It's miraculously effective for producing blood, especially for you."

Hearing these words, Xu Yourong was at a loss. For a very long time, she did not say anything.

Only now did she realize why he was so tense, his steps so rushed, why he could ignore all those crystals and treasures.

He was in a hurry to find medicine for her.

This deeply moved her.

She cultivated the Dao of the external world, mixing herself with worldly affairs. So that her Dao heart would be brightly lit, she could not be delighted by things or grieve for her fellow man. Thus in the eyes of the common people, she was very haughty and cold, a phoenix that soared high in the sky. She also viewed herself in this way. She believed that she would never suffer such an emotion that would harm her Dao heart, that she would never be deeply moved by anything.

In these plains, from that patch of reeds to this mausoleum, there were several times where she had almost been truly moved by his actions, but every time, she had used her unimaginable mental willpower to suppress it. For someone like her, to suppress love and hate was relatively easy. To suppress anger was also very easy. But to be moved was a very special emotion and very difficult to suppress.

The emotion would never suddenly appear. It required a very long time to gradually appear, but the moment it truly made itself known, it certainly was rather sudden. It required a certain point. To gather and then explode... these words could be used to talk about cultivation, but it could also be used to describe this emotion. At this moment, that emotion had finally broken through that unyielding wall, and in the cool breeze, it began to sway and grow.

She was truly deeply moved.

# Chapter 306 - Waiting For The Arrival Of Fate

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Chen Changsheng did not know what Xu Yourong was thinking at this moment, much less the fact that her emotions underwent such great change in such a short time. He removed the fireflow pill from the jade box, and directly placed it to her lips. Afterwards, almost instantly, or even somewhat roughly, he shoved it in. Xu Yourong's lips opened slightly. She was about to say something, to express her gratitude... and her moved feeling to him. However, she did not speak. It was directly blocked by the pill.

"An hour before and after consumption, you cannot drink water, otherwise it will decrease the essence of fire within the pill." Chen Changsheng stared at her, who was currently red-faced from being choked off, and spoke seriously. However, some worry bloomed in his heart.

The fireflow pill was very large. Xu Yourong was unable to speak at all, and only swallowed after a very long time. It was very tiring, and afterwards, she began to cough. A while later, when she recovered slightly, she looked at him and said in an irritated manner, "Even if I can't drink water, give me a reminder. Don't you know that coughs are uncomfortable?"

Although she spoke irritated, her voice was instead slightly peaceful. It was a grumble, but it slightly seemed similar to a spoiled child throwing a tantrum.

Chen Changsheng was unable to tell and said with his eyebrows

slightly furrowed, “Sorry, I was slightly anxious. However, there is nothing to fear about coughing. It is not choking. It should be a common sign of expelling poison.

Even Xu Yourong herself did not realise that she had revealed a spoilt look just before. However, she felt slightly embarrassed, and said quietly, “I don’t know whether it is the effects of the medicine, but I feel slightly sleepy.”

How could it be a common sign of expelling poison? She was just looking for an opportunity to speak. How could the medicinal effects kick in so quickly, it was only because he did not know how to respond to it. In the end, it was still like what Tang Thirty-Six had said in the Plum Garden Inn, he and she were really two people that caused others to be speechless.

Whether it was because of the medicinal effects, or for some other reason, Xu Yourong did feel slightly sleepy.

Chen Changsheng carried her out of the stone room and into the corridor to take shelter from the wind. He removed some cloth from the seventh stone room and covered her. All of the most valuable silks and satins in the mausoleum, including the extremely rare silk created by the snow silkworm, had all turned into broken fragments. Interestingly, the most worthless sackcloth remained as it was before. What he lay on her was the curtain screening made out of sackcloth.

Gazing at the sleeping girl, he secretly prayed that the fireflow pill still contained enough efficacy. Afterwards, he walked into the stone room again, and opened that jade box again, carefully

sniffing it. The worry in his heart did not disappear, instead, it grew stronger and stronger.

Only after discovering and collecting the different types of spirit medicines that had not completely deteriorated did he finally have time to have a look at the harvest from the stone rooms. Using his spiritual sense to scan over it slightly, the items he inspected first were the secret manuals and techniques.

He read through the Daoist Canons since childhood. After arriving in the capital, he had also read all of the several tens of thousands of books within the Orthodoxy Academy library diligently. As a result of this, when he read through the secret manuals and techniques, he only needed to see the name to know which school or sect it belonged to.

Contrary to what ordinary people imagined, the secret manuals and techniques were not rare in the slightest, and he was naturally unable to master all these techniques in a night. Speaking of which, the experts that had the qualifications to be Zhou Dufu's opponent had all originated from famous schools and sects. They had all become ghosts under Zhou Dufu's blade, but the legacy of the schools and sects were not broken.

Similar to how Mount Li remained strong even though the secrets of the Mount Li Sword Style were taken by the White Emperor Clan. However... it was just like the secrets of the Mount Li Sword Style; the secret manuals and techniques naturally were extremely valuable, or at least to those schools and sects, as these were all the original copies.

Afterwards, he began inspecting the magical artifacts. Over time, an overwhelming majority of the magical artifacts had decreased in power. Under the directions of Xu Yourong, he collected a few artifacts that still had some power, but they were still far from as they were years ago, and could not be compared with the divine weaponry on the Tier of Legendary Weapons at all. Only the black Soul Pivot was an exception.

Time was indeed the greatest magical artifact in the world.

Chen Changsheng suddenly had a theory. Zhou Dufu was the true legend of the continent, an unrivalled existence. The Garden of Zhou was his world, and this was his mausoleum. Logically, there should have been some objects of even better quality, that had the qualifications of being picked to be buried with him. Were these objects taken by someone?

In the long corridor before the nine stone rooms, there was a thin layer of dust which had many disorderly footprints. However, these footprints were all left by him, and all the magical artifacts, treasure and secret manuals still remained. This was proof that nobody had entered before.

In the past several hundreds of years, there were countless cultivators who wanted to locate Zhou Dufu's mausoleum, and wanted to receive his legacy as well as the treasures from it. These cultivators were either brimming with talent, or they had made extremely sufficient preparations. These people were all at least peak level Ethereal Opening before they dared to enter the mysterious Plains of the Unsetting Sun, yet, they never arrived there, and instead died on the journey. For him to be able to enter

this grassland, and arrive at this mausoleum, it was not because he was more outstanding and stronger than these seniors, it was due to the fact he had the Yellow Paper Umbrella.

After a moment of pondering, he gazed at the Yellow Paper Umbrella in his hands once again.

After entering the mausoleum, he did not put the umbrella away.

If he did not have this umbrella, or if he had not chased after the faintly discernable sword intent which led their way, it would be impossible for them to arrive here in the first place. There was a higher possibility that they would have already become lost in this dangerous grassland, becoming the food of the groups of monsters. However, how would they leave afterwards? Would they still have to rely on the Yellow Paper Umbrella? Or would they have to look for the strand of sword intent?

He had always felt that the Yellow Paper Umbrella bringing him here was the beckoning of fate.

Yes, he believed in fate.

This seemed extremely preposterous, because when he came to the capital from the old temple in Xining Village, he objective was to change his own fate. However, in the deepest region within his consciousness, he truly believed in the existence of fate, and even believed in it more than anyone else.

There must be a mountain in front of him for him to climb the large mountain.

There must be a large, rough river for him to cross the river.

There must be an objective for him to strive towards the objective.

There must be fate for him to change fate.

The final words of Wang Zhice's diary had said, "There is no fate."

These four words could shake the world, but to him, it was just a new view.

His view was different from Wang Zhice's. It had to be different. He wanted to see his own fate clearly before changing it.

If fate allowed him to meet so many people, to do so many things in the capital before finally bringing him to the Garden of Zhou, then in the Garden of Zhou, what kind of fate was awaiting him? The Yellow Paper Umbrella had sensed that strand of sword intent and brought him to this mausoleum. There was definitely some deep meaning hidden behind it. If he wanted to leave the Garden of Zhou, did it mean that he needed to find the strand of sword intent?

Was the sword intent in the Sword Pool? Where was the Sword

Pool? Walking through the long passageway and arriving outside the mausoleum, he stood on the tall platform. Chen Changsheng used his left hand to support his back while his right hand held onto the Yellow Paper Umbrella, and gazed at the grassland before his eyes.

It was already sunset. The distant sun had already arrived in its fixed position for every night—the edge of the grassland, above the horizon. Under the warm and red light, the endless grassland seemed to be burning. The ponds hidden within the grasslands were similar to countless small rivers, reflecting the appearance of the sky. Behind him was the mausoleum of Zhou Dufu.

If the person who saw this scene at this moment was a gifted scholar who has grieved for the changing seasons, he would probably feel even more sorrow, and sigh sorrowfully because everything in the world could not win against time. However, he did not.

The setting sun remained at the distant edge of the grasslands, however, the surroundings of the mausoleum suddenly began to rain.

Chen Changsheng raised the Yellow Paper Umbrella.

Drops of rain pitter-pattered on the surface of the umbrella. The droplets transformed into countless small splashes, constantly leaping up before falling down.

He released his spiritual sense, extending it from the shaft of the

umbrella, all the way up to the canopy of the umbrella. Finally, like the leaping small splashes of water, the spiritual sense left, dispersing into the surrounding grassland of the mausoleum.

He was well-versed in the Daoist Canons, and was confident about the fact that the sword intent could not gain an individuality. Since it did not have an individuality, it was impossible for it to change its own state of its own accord. At the very beginning, he could feel its existence beside the cold pool, because the sword intent had always existed, waiting to be discovered. In this case, the sword intent should not have been able to disappear on its own accord.

If an object could not disappear on its own accord but was unable to be found, then it must have been hidden by someone.

Chen Changsheng stood in the rain, and released his spiritual sense into the grassland. He searched for the target, and at the same time, he began to comb out the changes that occurred when he approached this mausoleum—in the instant Xu Yourong laid eyes on the mausoleum, the sword intent disappeared. At that time, he thought that the sword intent had already completed its orders of leading the Yellow Paper Umbrella, so it naturally disappeared. After he had calmed down, and arrived at the same conclusion, he had naturally confirmed that this was not the case; the strand of sword intent should have been hidden away by a certain ‘person’.

And that ‘person’ should have been the mausoleum.

He turned around and gazed at the mausoleum behind him.

The mausoleum formed from piles of huge rocks grew steeper the higher it was. It was unbelievably tall.

Chen Changsheng stood at the centre of the mausoleum; the mausoleum seemed even taller, as if it pierced the layer of clouds in the sky.

His gaze followed the upper component of the mausoleum and landed on the grey and dull clouds. He only saw the dark clouds surge, and in the depths were the faint but constant flashes of lightning, they seemed especially terrifying. Even though they were separated by thousands of zhang, he could clearly feel that there was a great Qi within the clouds that was capable of destroying the world—the mausoleum was the core of the Garden of Zhou. This Qi should have been the tangible form of the rules of the Garden of Zhou.

The rain gradually fell heavier and heavier, and most of the huge rocks within the mausoleum were wet. Between every layer of rock, there would be countless thin streams of waterfalls flowing. If one were to look at it from outside the mausoleum, he would definitely feel that this scene was very spectacular, with a hair-raising beauty. However, for he who stood within the mausoleum, he could only feel his hair rise and naturally could not feel the beauty.

“If there is time, I must leave the area of pressure from the mausoleum, and see if that sword intent will appear once again or not.”

He thought silently, and then heard a vague sound of someone calling for him. Holding the Yellow Paper Umbrella, he once again walked into the mausoleum.

Xu Yourong had awoken. Her complexion remained pale, but she appeared slightly better, and seemed to have recovered some energy.

He asked, “Were you calling for me?”

The rain outside the mausoleum was extremely heavy, and even though he had the umbrella, he was still wet. He appeared to be in a rather sorry condition.

However, Xu Yourong did not laugh at him and shook her head. She said quietly, “You heard wrong.”

Chen Changsheng thought that it was probably due to the fact that he was far too worried about her injuries and had really misheard it.

Xu Yourong looked at him silently. Her two hands beneath the sackcloth were slightly clenched.

When Xu Yourong first woke up, she could not see him by her side. The surroundings were gloomy, actually causing her to feel scared, or more accurately, flustered.

Ever since her bloodline had awakened by itself, she had never

felt flustered.

She knew, that this was unrelated to her dependence on Chen Changsheng, and was also unrelated to other things.

This was the manifestation of the low spirits of will. She had become weaker and weaker, even her bright lit will of Dao slowly began to grow gloomy.

This was a sign of death.

Chen Changsheng crouched down beside her, and extended his hand to feel her pulse. He stayed silent for a long time, before saying with a smile, “Yes, the medicinal effects are currently dispersing. The poison can be considered to be not completely gone, but there should be no more major problems.”

The art of lying paid particular attention to ninety percent real and ten percent false.

Not a single word he had said was real.

Xu Yourong looked at his eyes and said indifferently, “Do you know that your smile is really fake?”

Chen Changsheng’s body became slightly rigid and laughed, “How can smiles be fake?”

Xu Yourong smiled slightly, “It indeed is not fake. It’s idiotic.”

Chen Changsheng acted as though he was slightly annoyed and replied, “I just hate your cold and arrogant way of speaking.”

“I will notice it... at least, on your face.” Xu Yourong said something that he did not expect.

Chen Changsheng stared blankly. Xu Yourong smiled and continued, “Your smile just a moment ago looked as if you were crying. It is indeed very idiotic, and anyone can tell it’s fake.”

Chen Changsheng was speechless. He lowered his head, and extended his hand to pull the edge of the sackcloth, helping her cover her legs.

“The medicine was useless, right?”

She gazed into his eyes. Her expression was very calm, as if she did not know that his answer would determine her own fate.

# Chapter 307 - I May Be Your Fate

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Time... indeed was an unimaginable beast. It could cause the strongest man under the stars to die, as well as cause the most valuable medicines to turn to waste. Perhaps Zhou Dufu did not understand medicine, but of the medicines that he had collected, they had all been stored exquisitely, no matter the environment or equipment used for storage. However, even so, there was still no method to maintain the medicinal effects after hundreds of years.

Xu Yourong confirmed it from Chen Changsheng's silence, and thought a little. Afterwards, she said, "Since it will be like this, let me sleep a little more."

She no longer coughed, and slept very peacefully.

If she was about to enter the eternal sleep, it would be impossible for a normal person in her situation to fall asleep. Chen Changsheng looked at the girl who was sleeping soundly, and an endless amount of admiration and respect bloomed in his heart. Just how strong of a willpower and mental power was needed for someone to sleep comfortably in such conditions?

The fireflow pill failed. How could he save her?

He hesitated a while, and resolved to use the method that had caused him to hesitate for a dozen or so days in the grassland—forceful stimulation of blood through acupuncture.

Forceful stimulation of blood through acupuncture was a method

that ignited the vitality and the strength of one's bloodline. It would cause extremely great harm to the subject. Before it had been successfully improved by his master Daoist Ji, the acupuncture technique basically belonged to the evil techniques in the Orthodoxy, with its use being strictly prohibited. Even now, the acupuncture technique was unable to completely avoid its severe side effects, so normally, it could only be used on a patient right before death.

From a certain perspective, forceful stimulation of blood through acupuncture was like the final gulp of old ginseng soup.

Since he made the decision, he no longer hesitated. He sat in front of Xu Yourong, and removed the golden silk on the ring finger of his right hand. With a slight control of his spiritual sense, the golden silk became straight like a needle, piercing the back of her neck like lightning.

Forceful stimulation of blood through acupuncture was very difficult. The most difficult part was entering the diseased vein with a single stroke. At the moment, she was asleep, so it was very suitable.

Xu Yourong furrowed her brows slightly, and was slightly in pain. She woke up.

“Don’t move—I am treating you.”

Chen Changsheng knew that she was not old, but to face change without being alarmed and to face matters calmly, he only need to

speak clearly, and she would co-operate. Just as expected, Xu Yourong calmed down very quickly. His true essence slowly carried a coldness into her body through the golden needle, travelling along her meridians and blood vessels like a tide. It dispersed all the poison that had deposited in her diaphragm, and at the same time, it dispersed her doubts from before.

Sweat beads the size of soybeans constantly appeared on Chen Changsheng's forehead, before being frozen into ice droplets, rolling and landing on the ground. It gave out a sharp and clear sound. As time flowed, the ground around the two of them was covered with frozen beads of sweat, which seemed like a fragment of a pearl sea. Some ice droplets even rolled far along the stone steps, only stopping after coming directly in contact with the huge obsidian coffin.

After a very long amount of time, the golden needle was removed from the back of Xu Yourong's neck, once again wrapping around Chen Changsheng's finger.

Even after another very long period, he did not speak, nor did Xu Yourong.

He lowered his head, and looked at the ice droplets on the ground. He felt slightly sad, and even more unwilling to resign—forcefully stimulating the blood through acupuncture was the last method he could think of. It was extremely dangerous and violent, but even so, it did not have any effects.

This type of acupuncture technique could ignite the vitality and bloodline of humans. Even an old man who was on his sickbed and

on his last breath could have some of his energy revived, or even have an opportunity to live stolen back from the netherworld. However, it did not have any effects on Xu Yourong, because her bloodline was already completely exhausted. Her vitality had long been exhausted by the constant battles and the journey.

Without wood, no matter how hotly and fiercely the fire burnt, how could it be ignited?

“Apologies.”

The person who said that was not Chen Changsheng, but rather Xu Yourong. She looked at him and said with a smile, “Although I don’t understand medical expertise, I know that the acupuncture technique you used earlier was very impressive. It is just a pity that I, the patient, am just too disappointing.”

This was true. She used the Sacred Light Technique to save many people in the Garden of Zhou, but this and medical expertise were matters of two different areas.

Chen Changsheng raised his head, and looked at her slightly swollen, but still elegant appearance. His mood was very gloomy.

“Your essence blood has already been exhausted. Other than enriching the blood, there are no other methods. However, I have already attempted to do so several times over the past few days. Your bloodline is slightly special, so the blood of monsters has no effect on you. I even believe that other than your own blood, there are no other types of blood that can have an effect on you. Then,

even if we leave the Garden of Zhou, there may be no method of treating you.”

He explained the current situation to her very honestly. To describe to a girl how her imminent death would come about, it had nothing to do with the admiration of her great willpower. Rather, it was a great, or even obstinate, attitude he had towards death. People did not know how they came to this world, but when leaving the world, they should have been clear-headed. Only like this could the journey of coming to this world be considered not to be wasted.

He did not explain his thoughts to Xu Yourong. Xu Yourong did not grieve, much less vent her anger at him, as if she understood what he meant. She said with a smile, “But if we are able to leave the Garden of Zhou, at least you will be able to survive.”

After arriving in this mausoleum, Xu Yourong often smiled, but the smiles actually were very weak. Chen Changsheng could not even bear to keep looking.

“I have not found the method of leaving the Garden of Zhou. I don’t know if this will make you slightly happier.” He looked at her and smiled. He knew that it was impossible for her to be happy because of this, but wished that an unfunny joke could cheer her up.

Xu Yourong did not cheer up, and the smile on her face instead slowly disappeared. Looking at him, she said peacefully, “Looks like I will die.”

Despite hearing this sentence before, Chen Changsheng suddenly felt his chest being ruthlessly smashed by a rock, feeling horrible to the extreme.

He recalled that night when she had said that she was only fifteen, the same age as him. For life to end in the middle of youth, this really was the most sorrowful thing in the world. It was a sorrow that he had felt in advance on countless nights.

Towards death, he had already prepared for a very long time. No one was more prepared than him, but now that she was just about to die in front of him, he still did not have any methods.

“I don’t want to die,” Xu Yourong looked at him and said seriously.

When she said that, she did not feel sad, and her expression likewise remained calm. This was because she did not want to cordially invite his pity, and only wanted to tell him her thoughts at the final moment.

“You will not die,” Chen Changsheng said.

Xu Yourong said, “You know that I am unable to accept this kind of unpersuasive comforting.”

Chen Changsheng suddenly thought of something and was slightly entranced. He said with a slightly trembling voice, “You...

won't die."

Xu Yourong's expression changed slightly. She did not understand why his mood had suddenly become slightly abnormal.

"You won't die."

Chen Changsheng said it for the third time. But this time, his voice was abnormally calm and resolute, and his clear eyes were incomparably bright.

Xu Yourong thought that he had grown slightly foolish and said, "For my death, you do not need to shoulder any responsibilities."

Chen Changsheng said, "But I don't want you to die."

Xu Yourong used a tired voice to make fun of him, "Perhaps you are a god, able to let people live as long as you want to."

"Yes." Chen Changsheng's clear voice echoed in the spacious mausoleum. It carried such determination.

Xu Yourong stared at him blankly.

He began laughing.

He did not know why fate brought him into the Garden of Zhou,

or why it had brought him to this mausoleum. Perhaps it was due to the sword intent, perhaps it was something else, but he knew one thing: he could perhaps change the fate of this girl.

In other words, he was her fate, or at least, a part of it.

# Chapter 308 - I Offer My Blood To This Girl

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The reason why Chen Changsheng thought this way was because he had thought of a method to save her.

The method was not mentioned in the three thousand scriptures of the Dao. There was no record of it in the medical arts. No one had ever used this method before. Upon hearing it, it seemed crazy, completely bereft of logic. But the more he thought about it, the more ardently he believed this method to be of some use. If his guess was correct, it was just as Xu Yourong had said... as long as he did not want anyone to die, it would be very difficult for them to do so.

However, it was not a given that it would work, and his senior would definitely be against it were he present.

He did not spend much time thinking it through before explaining to her in a grave tone of voice, "In a little while, I will be using a certain method. I'm telling you in advance so that, hopefully, when the time comes, you won't be too shocked."

Seeing his clear and bright eyes, Xu Yourong also grew more serious and asked, "What method?"

She was not afraid of death, which was why she could express such indifference. In spite of this, when seeing a glimmer of hope in the depths of despair, anyone would feel antsy. It could no longer be treated as a trifling matter, but she remained cautious.

"Do you know how to cure a dead horse?" Chen Changsheng smiled at her and said.

This was a famous proverb. She thought that he was using it here as a joke, so she helplessly looked back at him and thought to herself, I already told you so many times. You're not good at making jokes. Why bother embarrassing yourself like this?

"You cure a dead horse by treating it as you would a living horse."  
You have no blood, so I just have to give you my blood."

(TN: 死马当活马, "treat a dead horse as a live horse", is a Chinese proverb that means "to do everything that is possible".)

Chen Changsheng began to roll up his sleeve. Rolling it up halfway, he realized that the rolled-up cuffs were a hindrance, so he decided it would be better to just take his shirt off.

Many days ago, because he was afraid that Xu Yourong would get cold, his outer garment had been draped over her body this entire time. He was only wearing a tight-fitting shirt, which was very easy to take off. He immediately took it off and proceeded to grip his dagger, preparing to cut at his wrist.

A hand grabbed onto his left wrist, blocking the dagger edge from proceeding.

"You... want to give me your blood?"

She stared into his eyes and sternly said, "Although I've never

told you that my blood is different from a normal person's, you also know that the blood of those monsters we caught on the way were of no use, so what need is there to keep trying?"

Chen Changsheng looked back at her. "It's exactly because I got too caught up in this line of thinking that I forgot about something."

"Forgot what?" she asked.

Chen Changsheng replied, "I'm not a monster, and my blood is not of monsters."

The edges of Xu Yourong's lips perked up in a mocking smile—she was not making fun of Chen Changsheng's wishful thinking, but she was mocking herself. The true blood of the Heavenly Phoenix that flowed within her veins was the source of all her power and glory, yet now that she had lost almost all of it, she realized that it had transformed from her pride into the reason for her imminent death!

Chen Changsheng's blood was naturally not the same as a monster's, but how could the blood of a normal human being be a substitute for the true blood of the Heavenly Phoenix?

A cry of surprise rang out through the mausoleum.

Chen Changsheng cared not for her desires. He threw her hand aside and slit his wrist with the dagger.

In the cold world within the well by the New North Bridge, he had bathed in dragon blood, a bath more flawless than even the most flawless purification. From this, he obtained unimaginable strength and speed and an even more unimaginably powerful body. It was only by relying on these properties that he was able to defeat so many young geniuses in the continuous duels of the Grand Examination and finally obtain the first rank of the first banner.

If it was a normal weapon, or even some of the divine weapons on the Tier of Legendary Weapons, even if in his hands, they would find it very difficult to break through his skin. In the ambush by the lakeshore, the two powerful demon beauties had at the final moment almost shattered his internal organs, but they had still been unable to leave a single wound on his body. This was all because of his powerful body.

However, the dagger in his hands could.

The dagger was gifted to him by Senior Yu Ren when he was leaving Xining Village's old temple. It seemed exceptionally ordinary and unremarkable. It was not famous in the world, much less on the Tier of Legendary Weapons, but Chen Changsheng had never seen a sharper blade. Whether it was Tang Thirty-Six's Wenshui Sword or the Mount Li Relic Sword on Qi Jian's waist, none of them were as sharp as this dagger.

With a soft swish, a straight red line appeared on his wrist, and then that line began to split apart before his eyes. Blood rushed out of the wound and seemed almost about to spill onto the floor.

He had already placed the sheath below it.

Without a sound, his blood slowly flowed into the sheath.

"Just what are you planning to do?" Xu Yourong was very angry because he was not listening to her. Because he was so stubborn.

Then, she smelled a very faint scent.

It was a very strange scent, lighter than the lightest fragrance of a flower and denser than the strongest perfume.

After the initial whiff of that scent, it went through countless changes. Dense, then light. Clear, then rich.

Sometimes, it was the fragrance of a flower, and then sometimes it was like honey. Sometimes it was like unripe fruit freshly picked from the garden already possessing its own odor.

Just what was that smell?

She looked at Chen Changsheng's wrist and confirmed that the smell was coming from his blood.

The more Chen Changsheng bled, the stronger that scent grew.

As time passed, she could feel it all the more.

It was the most sinister allure, and also the purest sweetness.

The most ancient and the most new.

Wondrous beyond compare.

It was the extremely complex and vivid odor of life.

It was an unimaginably powerful vitality.

Xu Yourong stared at Chen Changsheng, so shocked that she could not get the words out of her mouth. Not even Zhou Dufu's mausoleum could give her such a massive shock... Just what is this blood? Just what sort of person are you? Are you... human?

As she was thinking about these things, she fell unconscious.

It was not that this scene before her and the smell of the blood was too much to cope with, but that Chen Changsheng had quietly thrust a needle into her [Hegu point](#) prior to this.

(TN: The Hegu point is an acupuncture point located on the hand.)

When he explained the method he was going to use to save her, it was just to tell her. It did not mean that he wanted her to see him do it. In order to let her maintain a calm state of mind, making her

fall unconscious was the best choice. In the same vein, this also ensured that she would not disturb the proceedings. It must be known that every drop of his blood was extremely precious.

Most importantly, he did not know how she would react once she smelled his blood.

Time slowly passed and the blood flowing from his wrist gradually stagnated, and the wound slowly closed up. He had never done this sort of thing before, nor did he know if the blood in the sheath was enough. In order to ensure that he would have enough for this purpose, he resolutely took up his dagger and opened up the wound once more, even going a bit deeper... it hurt a little, but it was not so much that he could not bear it.

He repeated this scene four times.

Blood unendingly flowed from his wrist into the sheath.

After a very long time, he thought to himself, this should be enough right?

Suddenly, the scene before his eyes blurred.

Could it be that he was sickened by the sight of blood? This had never happened before. After a while, his mind cleared somewhat, and he understood that this was not getting sick from the sight of blood, nor was it anxiety brought about by hunger. The reason for this situation was because he had lost too much blood.

The next task was to infuse this blood into her body.

He tied a piece of cloth tightly over the wound on his wrist to ensure that it would not get in the way, and also to prevent any more blood from trickling out. Then he walked over to Xu Yourong's side, untied the front lapel of her clothes, and exposed her pure white neck and smooth shoulder. The fingers of his left hand lightly stroked her skin while the dagger in his right hand slowly followed.

An abnormally feeble vibration that could not be described as clear, much less robust, was transmitted from her skin to his fingers.

This was the place.

He lowered his dagger over that spot and, with a tiny amount of strength, thrust it inwards.

# Chapter 309 - Mine Are Yours, And Yours Are Still Mine

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The edge of the dagger penetrated her skin, cutting open her blood vessel.

No blood spurted out. Blood had not flowed out at all, because there was almost no blood left in her body.

Chen Changsheng grabbed his dagger sheath, and placed the opening of the sheath to the wound on her neck.

With a slight movement of spiritual sense, a thin flow of blood appeared out of the sheath, seeming like it had come out of nothing.

The flow of blood was extremely thin, as if it were thinner than hair. It was slowly poured into her blood vessel.

In the entire process, he was extremely careful and alert, and refined his spiritual sense to the limit.

There were no sounds.

There was only a smell.

The smell of his blood slowly diffused into the spacious mausoleum.

After an unknown amount of time, he collected the sheath again. A coldness appeared on the index finger of his right hand, and he used it to press onto Xu Yourong's neck. After a while, only after confirming that her blood vessel and wound had already been sealed by the extremely thin piece of ice, did he begin to treat his own wound.

The distinct wound on his wrist, which was so deep that bone could be vaguely seen, slowly healed, or in other words, was sealed with ice.

There were some remaining blood stains on the side of the wound. He thought about the explanation his senior personally had given him years ago, and hesitated a while. He then brought the wrist to his lips, and began to lick carefully, like a young animal drinking milk.

Back then, his senior had once said to him that if he was injured, and began to bleed, he had to use this method. Only this method of consuming the blood into his stomach could stop the smell of the blood from continuing to pervade. Otherwise, being washed with water, being buried by sand, or even being burnt by great flames, would still be unable to cause this smell to disappear.

This was the first time Chen Changsheng had tasted his own blood. In the previous battles, he came dangerously close to spitting blood many times, but it was then forcefully swallowed back down. However, before, the blood had only reached his throat. This time, it was on his tongue.

As it turned out, his blood was sweet.

That was what he thought.

The taste indeed was very nice.

It seemed to be delicious.

It really was delicious.

He wanted to eat some more.

Suddenly, he woke up. He was covered in sweat, which was then frozen into frost. He had actually been licking faster and faster and using more and more power, like a young animal drenched in blood, greedily licking the milk of its mother who had already died.

If he did not wake up fast enough, he probably would have even licked open the wound on his wrist.

The mausoleum fell into a deathly silence.

Only after a very long time was there a breeze.

The frozen droplets of sweat slowly began to roll, giving out sounds of rolling.

He leaned on the stone pillar tiredly. His face was abnormally pale.

Because he had bled too much, and also because of dread.

That year when he was ten, his spirit was expelled along with his sweat, out of his body, causing a worldly phenomenon. In the great mountain shrouded in clouds behind Xining Village, they received the attention of unknown, terrifying existences. From that night onwards, he knew that his body was abnormal. This was not to say that he was ill, but rather, to many existences, his spirit was the most delicious fruit, and contained an irresistible enticement.

“If ordinary people discover your blood is different, you will die, and you will definitely invite an end that is even more tragic than death.”

When his senior had said that to him, it was on the second night after turning ten. At that time, his senior took a very long time before being able to clearly express the meaning of it, because both of his arms were very sore and powerless, always making mistakes when making hand signs.

He asked his senior why was it like that. His senior stayed silent for a very long time before telling him that it was because the night before, when he was always fanning, he wanted to quickly fan away the smell that issued from his body.

He asked his senior why was it like that. His senior stayed silent

for a very long time again, before telling him that the night before, after he had smelt that smell for a long time, he suddenly really wanted to suck his blood dry and eat him.

In Chen Changsheng's eyes, his senior Yu Ren was the bravest person in the world, and the person who was the nicest to him. If his senior wanted him to die, he could die, but if his senior wanted to eat him...

He thought about it for a very long time, but still thought that this matter was too horrifying.

The blood that flowed in his body was delicious to all lives. As the person involved, it was obviously detrimental to him. That was why he disliked his own blood, or even loathed or feared it. Because of this type of mentality, he never thought about it, and even sometimes subconsciously forgot that his blood was special in some areas.

At dawn, after the night had passed, the pervading spirit disappeared into his body, entering his blood. Not even a sliver of it was emitted. However, this type of loathing and fear continued to linger in the deepest part of his mind.

After arriving in the capital, he thought he had already escaped far away from this horrifying memory. He could feel as if the taste of his blood had slowly weakened. However, at the dawn of the day when he comprehended all of the front mausoleum of the Mausoleum of Books in one day, when he absorbed starlight during the day for Purification for the first time, he discovered shockingly that everything seemed to return to what it was like on the night

when he was ten.

He did not want to go through a night like that again, and did not want to attract the unknown attention within the clouds.

As a result, he became even more careful and cautious. When he was heavily injured during battle, and wanted to spit blood, even if he had to take risks, he would swallow it back down at the first moment. No matter how strong the opponent he faced, he no longer dared to burn all of the lake water outside his Ethereal Opening, because he worried that it would become like that time underground, where he was exploded by true essence into a bloody mess.

To not bleed, and not let anyone smell his blood. This was a matter that he did not need to think about, but at the same time, it was the matter that had the greatest importance.

So much that it was even more important than his life.

Because he always remembered his senior's warning.

However, today, in this mausoleum, he did not heed his senior's warning.

Because he wanted to save someone.

He looked at the sleeping Xu Yourong, and revealed a satisfied smile. Due to her poisoning, her face was always slightly swollen,

but at that moment, the swelling clearly subsided a lot. Her elegant appearance became even clearer.

Most importantly, on her face that was pale like snow, the color of blood slowly appeared.

At an area very far away from Zhou Dufu's mausoleum, there was a run-down temple. If counted from the first sacrificial temple that was one thousand li away, this temple was the ninth. This also meant that they were only two hundred li away from Zhou Dufu's mausoleum.

This was a matter that even children at the first stages of learning could calculate clearly, so Nanke and the others naturally did not get it wrong. The zither-playing old man sighed with emotion, "Who thought that there would actually be a day in my life where I would actually see the Mausoleum of Zhou?"

Teng Xiaoming carried a pole, and gazed into the distance. He could vaguely see the towering black mass under the sky. Despite being renowned for being slow and silent, his expression seemed slightly moved at that moment. As for his wife, Liu Wan'er, and the two demon beauties, they were even more so.

After journeying for over ten days, even the experts of the Demon race felt slightly exhausted. However, thinking that Xu Yourong and Chen Changsheng were in front of them, awaiting death, and even more importantly, that the White Grass Path may have ended at the legendary Mausoleum of Zhou, what could this exhaustion be compared to?

Suddenly, the White Grass Path began to tremble slightly. The trembling originated from the depths of the vast grassland behind them.

The zither-playing old man felt slightly flabbergasted, and turned around to look at the plains. He said with a solemn expression, “The monsters seem to have become slightly agitated.”

Suddenly, his expression changed immensely. He opened his mouth, but was so shocked that he could not say anything. The Demon General couple also saw the phenomena in the sky, and the Qi in their bodies suddenly rose to the limit that the Garden of Zhou allowed.

A shadow appeared in the sky above the grassland. The shadow was so big that it seemed to almost cover up half of the sky. The shadow currently moved slowly, and from a distance, it seemed like a pair of massive wings.

Nanke looked at the shadow in the sky and said with her brows slightly furrowed, “Even the great peng is displaying some mad behavior. What exactly is happening?”

She did not know that the agitation of the monsters of the plains came from the depths of the mausoleum two hundred li away. In the depths of the mausoleum, a teenager had cut open his wrist, causing fresh blood to come in contact with the air. The smell of the blood dispersed in the grassland, and was already extremely thin. However, it was still enough to cause an extremely crazy

thirst to bloom in the monsters of this world.

The surroundings of the mausoleum had an extremely ingenious design of ventilation and windows. Rainwater could not flow through these paths, but they allowed fresh air and light in. Why Zhou Dufu designed his mausoleum this way was a complete mystery. Did the dead still need fresh air, or need to enjoy the beautiful radiance of spring?

Chen Changsheng could not understand why. It was just that through the change in light and the change in the humidity of the air, he confirmed that it should have been the early morning of the second day, and also that the rain outside the mausoleum should have stopped.

Just at that moment, Xu Yourong finally woke up.

Chen Changsheng saw her and smiled.

She did not smile, and stared blankly at him. She asked, “You transfused your blood into my body?”

Chen Changsheng said, “More correctly, I transfused my blood into your blood vessels.”

Xu Yourong felt a little helpless, a little emotional and a little tired. She said, “I don’t know what method you used to do all this, but do you think this will work? I said before, my blood...”

“Yes, this will work.”

Without waiting for her to finish speaking, he cut her off with a smile. His face was slightly pale and his expression was slightly weary, but his gaze was very bright, very clean, and very confident, as if it was facing the sun for the first time. Although it was covered up by clouds, it did not lack in splendor.

Looking at his expression, a feeling of disbelief bloomed in Xu Yourong. She mumbled, “Even this works?”

“It seems to indeed work.”

Chen Changsheng walked to her side, and checked the mark on her neck. Afterwards, he said, “Feel it yourself.”

Xu Yourong was slightly at a loss. Subconsciously, she followed his instructions, and discovered that her blood was actually not exhausted like when she had first fainted. Although it was not as full as normal, and was slightly thin, at least it could guarantee that... she could live.

Just how important and how great was living? It was the most important, and the best.

Just that, why was she able to live?

What was this about?

At that moment, the blood that flowed in her body clearly was his blood, but why did it seem like her own blood, without any differences?

# Chapter 310 - Two Kids, In Desperate Straits Again

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She thought about the scene before she fainted and that unforgettable smell. Countless conjectures appeared in her mind, stunning her into silence.

...His blood was very pure, so it could conform with her body? However, right now, the blood that flowed in her body carried a clear spiritual imprint, and was clearly her blood. How did his blood turn into her own true blood of the Heavenly Phoenix?

She gazed at Chen Changsheng with her eyes wide. She was very much at a loss and felt a little helpless, so she seemed innocent.

In the fifteen years she had been alive, it was the first time that she had been so muddleheaded and dainty.

Chen Changsheng did not know how to explain it to her, but had decided against it regardless. He was just worried that she had just left the edge of death, so she was actually still extremely weak. Because the mental shock was too great, a few new questions appeared in her. But she needed a good rest, so he decided to make up some excuse. However, as soon as his words left his mouth, they were covered up by sounds of thunder.

Rumble!

The oppressive and loud sound of thunder originated from far

away and directly pierced through the main entrance of the mausoleum, echoing into their ears.

Chen Changsheng was a little confused. He thought, since the rain had just stopped before dawn, why is there still thunder? He supported Xu Yourong to the stone pillar and got her to sit down by leaning on the stone pillar. He prepared some fresh water and food, and served it in front of her. After saying a few words, he rushed out of the mausoleum.

Through the long passageway, he arrived outside the mausoleum. Gazing towards the origin of the thunder, his complexion immediately became even paler.

There was no rain where the thunder came from, nor even any clouds. However, the blue sky could not be seen, because that faraway area of the sky was taken up by a huge shadow.

Underneath that shadow was a black streak that was like the tide.

Although he could not see it clearly, his spiritual sense told him the cold and merciless truth. The black streak was a monster tide composed of countless monsters, two hundred li away. If it maintained its current speed, it would need roughly a day before arriving at the mausoleum.

Without time to ponder over why the monsters of the grassland would suddenly attack, as well as forming something like an army, or whether if there was someone in command, he turned around and walked into the mausoleum. He rushed back to Xu Yourong

and picked her up horizontally. He then said, “We need to leave.”

Along the way, the two of them already had many moments of bodily contact, but this way of carrying was naturally different. Before Xu Yourong had even awoken from her blank state, she began to feel bashful, and before her bashfulness turned into annoyance, she was surprised by his words.

“What happened?”

“There is a monster tide which should be heading towards the mausoleum. It might be commanded by someone, most likely the demons.”

“Should be the Soul Wood.”

With these two simple sentences, the two exchanged enough information, and made their own judgements.

Chen Changsheng ran out of the mausoleum while carrying her. At that time, the black line formed by the monster tide seemed to still be far away, near the horizon, and did not move. However, he knew that these terrifying monsters had gotten closer. Xu Yourong also finally saw that sight that could be considered spectacular. She did not lose her head out of fear, and instead directly asked the most important question: “Where are we going?”

With such a terrifying monster tide appearing, not to mention that they currently were heavily injured and exhausted, even if

they were in their peak conditions with their magical artifacts, they still could not do anything to such a situation. Just as Chen Changsheng had said, an immediate departure was crucial.

However, where would they go? The grassland was so mysterious and dangerous. If it were not for the directions of the Yellow Paper Umbrella, he could not have reached the mausoleum at all. The directions of the Yellow Paper Umbrella originated from that sword intent.

Although Xu Yourong did not know the inside story, she had already pinpointed long ago that only the umbrella could give them the directions to the mausoleum.

If they left the mausoleum and entered the grassland right now, the Yellow Paper Umbrella definitely would not have been able to give them a second targeted location. Then, they would definitely become lost in this grassland, and die like the expert seniors in the past.

Fortunately, the next sight they saw freed them from the trouble in this aspect. Of course, using positive words here seemed to be extremely inappropriate—they could see the black streak of the monster tide in the surrounding grasslands of the mausoleum, so all their directions of escape were already cut off.

Chen Changsheng had not spoken for a very long time. Originally, he still had many questions. How was this monster tide formed? Was it because they had entered Zhou Dufu's mausoleum and activated some sort of mechanism? Along the way, why were they not attacked by monsters? Why did these monsters seem to be

under the command of someone? However, these questions were already answered by Xu Yourong.

“Nanke prevented those monsters from attacking us because she wanted to follow us to find Zhou Dufu’s mausoleum.”

The Soul Pivot in the mausoleum originated from White Emperor City and could control monsters. However, the critically-important Soul Wood was not in the stone room. That piece of Soul Wood must have been in Nanke’s hands. As for why, it was something that they did not need to worry about at that moment.

There were an innumerable amount of monsters in the black line. Many of the monsters possessed unimaginable strength. Even though they were separated by a distance of two hundred li, they could still feel that the Qi that some monsters gave off were comparable to the human experts at the Star Condensation realm.

Let alone the true, horrifying body of that shadow in the sky.

He asked, “Since she can control the monsters, she could have completely relied on the monsters to lead the way. Why did she follow us?”

Xu Yourong said. “The Soul Wood must be together with the Soul Pivot to activate all of its uses. Perhaps because of this, she is unable to communicate with those monsters. These monsters will only battle with her, but will not do anything else.”

After saying that, the two of them fell silent again.

With the black line formed from the monster tide in the surroundings of the mausoleum, even if they were peak level Star Condensation experts, it would be very difficult to break out. At that moment, doing some analysis was completely pointless.

The grassland after rain was a little cold. The green trees that grew out from the cracks of the mausoleum were very short and unable to block the wind. With his face being caressed slightly by the cold, Chen Changsheng looked at her and said, “Let’s go back inside.”

Since they were unable to leave, guarding the mausoleum was the best, and the only, choice.

Xu Yourong said, “I don’t want to die in another person’s grave.”

Chen Changsheng considered things more practically and said, “But it’s a little cold outside.”

Xu Yourong pulled out the Tong Bow from nowhere, and inserted it into a crack in the rock. With a series of rustles, countless green leaves appeared out of the longbow. It fluttered in the breeze, but it blocked out most of the coldness.

When Chen Changsheng woke up in the mountain cave, he did not see that the Tong Bow had changed into a green tree. This was the first time he had seen it, and felt the great defensive Qi within.

With surprise, he said, “This is actually the Tong Palace?”

Xu Yourong changed slightly in expression, and thought, was he really a secret disciple of the Snow Mountain Sect? Why does he have so many secrets on him? Actually able to tell that this is the Tong Palace with a single glance?

When Chen Changsheng carried her out, he did not forget the sackcloth wrap that was on top of her. At this moment, he spread it on the floor, and supported her to sit down. He then said, “Since you don’t want to go inside, watching from here works too.”

Unable to escape into the sky, they still had only one path—death. Xu Yourong, who had come back from a journey to the edge of death, had seen its true character. Her mental state was unprecedently calm. She did not think about the secrets hidden on Chen Changsheng’s body, and stayed calm but indifferent.

“I knew this already. Why did you do those things earlier? It was a waste.”

Chen Changsheng disagreed with her view and said, “Being able to live an extra moment is always good. Not even a day, perhaps only an hour, a breath, or even a moment, it is all good.”

Xu Yourong felt his honesty, and thought he was such a person who loved and longed for life. Could only these types of people be so kind? He really was a good person.

“Thank you for your blood.”

Thinking about the scene and the smell from before, even if she had returned to her original state and peak mental condition, her feelings would still have a slight but wonderful change. As a result, her gaze on him became slightly complicated.

“I know what you are thinking about.”

Chen Changsheng stayed silent for a while and then said, “There are problems with my blood. I don’t know what the problems are, but in short, people or other organisms that smell my blood will all want to eat me. No one is able to resist this type of enticement.”

Other than the broken meridians, and that his future prospects were dismal due to being doomed to die at the age of twenty, this was his greatest secret. He had not told Luoluo or Tang Thirty-Six, but right now, in front of Xu Yourong, he said it very calmly. This did not mean that he trusted this girl more than Luoluo or Tang Thirty-Six, but rather because the current environment and situation was very special. It was just like the first time he had seen the Black Dragon. Under the pressure of death, people were always willing to say anything.

Hearing his words, Xu Yourong said, “I did not think like that.”

Chen Changsheng began to laugh. He said, “What a girl who likes to excel over others. To not want to drink my blood or eat my flesh is nothing to be proud of, and also, don’t forget that I made you faint.”

He had said exactly what Xu Yourong was thinking. She did not get mad, and said with a smile, “Then just why don’t you believe in what I said?”

“You should have felt it before.” Chen Changsheng thought about himself before, how he came dangerously close to losing his senses, wanting to drink all of his own blood. He thought he had felt it himself after all. Afterwards, he said seriously, “Also, this is what my senior had said. I believe him.”

Xu Yourong was slightly surprised. “You have a senior?”

Chen Changsheng was very helpless and said, “I also have a master.”

Xu Yourong disliked the way he spoke, and was slightly displeased. She said, “Smooth-talker.”

Chen Changsheng admitted it without a hitch. “I was influenced by a friend.”

“Even you, such a boring person, has friends?” Xu Yourong made fun of him.

Chen Changsheng said, “If you, a cold and arrogant girl, can have friends, why can’t I?”

“When did I tell you I have friends?”

When she said that, her elegant eyebrows seemed to almost fly away, and she seemed very proud of herself. This was acting out of spite, or perhaps childishness, or perhaps venting. In any case, Chen Changsheng could not understand what there was to be proud of about having no friends. He once again felt that this genius girl of the Elf race was a little lonely and pitiable, and said while smiling, “...Then do I count as one?”

Xu Yourong did not expect this sentence, and looked at him with a smile. She said, “Yes.”

# Chapter 311 - A Conversation Before The Abyss, A Person Whose Heart Is Moved

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Hearing the answer, Chen Changsheng felt slightly happy for some unknown reason, and then he felt slightly proud. He said, “Thank you.”

She replied, “No worries.”

“Anyway, I have a senior. I believe anything he says.” Chen Changsheng changed the topic again.

Xu Yourong asked seriously, “Regarding your blood, what did your senior say?”

Chen Changsheng said, “Senior said that only a Saint could resist the enticement of my blood.”

Xu Yourong thought, why was he so stubborn? As a result, she continued the conversation.

“Since your blood has not been completely drained, it means that no one has ever gone through the experience of the enticement.”

“There is.”

“Who?”

“Senior.”

“... You are still alive, proving that he did not drink your blood. But didn't he say that only Saints could resist that sort of enticement?”

“Yes, my senior is a Saint.”

Up to that moment, it finally became silent. Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong gazed at each other, and they did not know how to continue the conversation. Actually, they were both people bad at interacting with others. At this moment, right before death, they purposely wanted to have a joyful conversation, but not only did they not reach their objective, instead, it seemed slightly forced and awkward.

Both of them sighed in their hearts at the same time, before turning their heads and looking away from each other. Xu Yourong looked at the real world by the green leaves, and looked at the black line formed by the monster tide far away in the grassland. She asked, “Around when will it arrive?”

Chen Changsheng said, “Should be before sunset.”

Xu Yourong went silent for a while before saying, “Then that means this is our last day.”

Chen Changsheng was very sensitive to time and corrected her,

“It’s the last daytime.”

Xu Yourong laughed and did not go on to begin a pointless argument with him.

Chen Changsheng felt her current feelings and said after staying silent for a while, “Senior said, even if you try your best till the end and end up finding out that it was still impossible to change fate, then you can only appreciate and enjoy everything life has brought you.”

Only now did Xu Yourong understand where the words he had said that night in the temple to himself originated from. After quietly comprehending it for a moment, she felt that this simple sentence was not simple at all. Her evaluation of Chen Changsheng was very high. Hearing how much he respected his senior, she began to feel more and more that this senior was not an ordinary person—the world of cultivation believed that the Snow Mountain Sect had already fallen into decay, but who knew that it still had so many impressive young disciples?

Thinking about this, she very naturally connected it to her own sect. Her study at the Thirteen Divisions of Radiant Green had already ended long ago, and she was the only disciple of the South Stream Temple. Instead, she was slightly more familiar with the disciples of the Longevity Sect and especially the Mount Li Sword Sect. Moreover, she was in the same system as them, so they were martial brothers or sisters by name.

“I also have a martial brother.” Qiushan Jun was naturally who she mentioned.

Afterwards, she did not say anything for a very long time. In the years that she spent in the south cultivating, Qiushan Jun was always very nice to her, so nice that it even caused her to not realise, much less feel uncomfortable in any areas. People all said that they were a match made in heaven, and she also knew that Qiushan Jun was deeply in love with her. She could not help but think that if she died in the Garden of Zhou, how heartbroken would he be?

“And then?” Chen Changsheng did not understand why she suddenly went quiet and asked.

Xu Yourong said, “When we were in that temple discussing the word perfection, you said that it was impossible to have a perfect person in the world. I admit that is reasonable, but senior is the person closest to perfection I have seen in my life.”

Chen Changsheng thought that he also believed his one senior was very perfect. However, in the eyes of ordinary people, he was just an irregular extra.

“And my senior is very nice to me.” Xu Yourong said while looking into his eyes. It was unknown as to why she added this sentence.

Chen Changsheng did not know either and was even more lost as to why he felt slightly sour after hearing that. Even the sentence that he followed up with was slightly sour. This type of sourness was not reflected in the words, but rather in the intonation. It

carried a sort of purposeful indifference and disregard.

“So... you like him?”

He looked back into her eyes quietly and asked. At this moment, he felt that he was very strong.

If it was another time, or another young man who had asked this question, Xu Yourong obviously would not have replied. However, they were currently in the mausoleum of Zhou Dufu, and the person asking her that question was him... perhaps she was waiting for him to ask this question from the beginning, wanting to borrow the pressure of death... and his words to see her truest inner self clearly.

She asked herself a question very seriously and attentively at heart, and then gave out an answer.

She did not say anything and only shook her head.

Chen Changsheng's extremely disregarding feeling of sourness did not disappear, as she still needed to think about it—he had never experienced matters between opposite genders, so he did not understand that, because she gave out the answer after serious consideration, he should have been even more happy about it.

He thought about it and asked, “He likes you?”

This time, Xu Yourong did not think for too long and directly

nodded.

She had never thought that such behavior seemed slightly arrogant, as what she said was an objective truth.

Chen Changsheng let himself calm down and appeared to be slightly confused. Actually, all he wanted to do was make himself feel slightly happier. He continued to question, “Since he is so perfect, and he also likes you, why don’t you accept him?”

Very clearly, Xu Yourong had replied to questions like this before. It was not known whether it was Shuang’er, the Holy Maiden, or herself who had raised this question, but either way, her answer was very calm and smooth.

“Firstly, no matter how strong he is, he is only as strong as me.”

Before she even finished, it had already caused Chen Changsheng to object. At that moment, he had completely forgotten his current situation, just like that day in the temple. He felt that this girl had extremely large issues with her philosophies. He wanted to change her philosophies, to let her lead an even happier life. How could he still remember that the monster tide was about to reach them?

“Your mentality is wrong. It is making friends, not fighting. What has it got to do with who is strong and who is weak?”

Xu Yourong did not know what he was thinking about. She thought and said, “What you say is reasonable. To become

cultivation partners, his strength is already enough. It can even be said that, of the people in a similar age group, it is difficult for me to find an even more suitable partner. However, the path of cultivation is so long, and since we have to see each other all the time afterwards, I will follow my heart and find a partner who I like.”

Following your heart were three very good words. Chen Changsheng looked into her bright eyes and said seriously, “I support you.”

Xu Yourong only laughed and did not say anything. She thought, why would matters like this require the support of other people—those were all very good, but she just did not like it. Senior was great in every aspect, but she was just unable to be emotionally moved by him. That was the only reason.

The poison slowly subsided, but she was still weak at that moment. Her complexion was very pale and could not be called pretty. However, the happiness in her eyes instead was very beautiful in Chen Changsheng’s eyes, directly feeling that his heart had been moved.

To have the heart moved was a very vague phrase. The heart of people beat at every moment, so how could it be referred to as being moved? Was an increase in heart beat rate having one’s heart moved? Zhexiu’s heartbeat increased at intermittent intervals of time, but that was an illness.

Chen Changsheng also did not know.

However, he knew that he felt as though his heart had been moved at that moment.

# Chapter 312 - The Unwantable Woman, The Shameless Man

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The distant sun sat very low on the edge of the plains. In that black line that was the monster tide, there were many monsters that could fly. They blocked out the rays of light, causing the world to go dark.

On the high platform of the mausoleum, the green leaves of the wutong tree cast their mottled shadow over their figures like the night had come early.

The night had always signified death and the end, but it also often signified safety and peace. Under the cover of the night, people dared to do things they normally did not do, dared to feel emotions they normally did not feel, dared to talk about matters they normally did not talk about.

Those words were often true words, spoken from the heart.

At the moment, they could no longer clearly make out each other's faces, only the eyes. Fortunately, both of their eyes were very clear and bright. Chen Changsheng silently stared into her eyes for a long time, then abruptly said, "Truthfully, I've deceived you on something."

Xu Yourong was shocked, and said softly, "What thing?"

Chen Changsheng did not directly answer the question. "The

reason why I chose to deceive you back then is because... I'm engaged."

Once he said these words, he felt much more relaxed. Moreover, he knew exactly why he was so much more relaxed.

Upon hearing these words, Xu Yourong was very quiet for a long time. She felt a faint sense of disappointment, and she did not even know why she was disappointed.

Whenever such valorous matters were taken out of the bag, they would bloom with countless rays of light and thorns. It was very difficult to put these matters back in the bag, and also very difficult to make them go dark once more.

Chen Changsheng continued to gaze into her eyes as he spoke. "But I don't want to marry her, I want to end the engagement."

This was a supplement, an explanation, a declaration, a promise. Although nothing had happened between the two of them—he did not even know what she was thinking at the moment—since he was the first to have his heart moved, it was up to him to make a clean slate of everything. Just like his senior had once said, only by making a clean slate of things could one obtain a beautiful result.

Xu Yourong felt that his eyes were far too bright, so she lowered her head. She somewhat angrily thought to herself, why is he telling this to me?

Then, very curiously, she began to think of her fiancé. That man had used every method possible to get her to marry him... Yes, even now, she had no choice but to admit that her fiancé was truly outstanding, far more outstanding than she had imagined. Only that man's scheming was too deep, too hypocritical, not at all like this honest and reliable Snow Mountain Sect disciple.

Why would she compare him to that guy?

When she suddenly thought about this, she felt a little flustered.  
"Why do you not want to marry her?"

She asked this question to conceal her own fluctuating emotions, to prevent herself from thinking about such embarrassing things, but it was also because she really wanted to know just what sort of girl he liked and what sort of girl he did not like.

Chen Changsheng silently considered what to say, then said, "My fiancée is extremely famous in my world."

Xu Yourong thought to herself, in the bitter cold lands of the northeast, the aristocratic families have all already declined, and in the end, they were just provincial powers. They were only famous in the northeast, so she could not understand.

"She... is very proud."

Chen Changsheng seriously pondered this. Although he found that girl quite disagreeable, he did not think it was right to

badmouth her too much in front of another girl. After considering a few phrases, he continued, "Perhaps it was because of her family background, growing up in an unsuitable environment, which caused her to be very proud. That's not to say that she walked around with her foot raised high and a noble air, ordering people around by pointing her chin; it's just that she's gotten used to handling all matters by gazing down upon them from up high... including me."

Xu Yourong had never liked those arrogant and cold noble young ladies, so she said, "Your meaning is that she viewed you with contempt?"

Chen Changsheng nodded.

Xu Yourong thought to herself, his talent is so outstanding, his knowledge so extensive, his nature so honest; if that fiancée looked down on him, how proud and stupid was she, how terrible was her vision?

He said, "But what I hate about her the most is her feigned aloofness. She grew up on the Five Grains like everyone else, it's not like she's some immortal who dines on the wind and dew." (TN: The five grains are rice, wheat, beans, and two types of millet.)

Xu Yourong highly approved of his words. Every day she would see those devoted seniors and juniors of the South Stream Temple's outer sect, their faces masked in white cloth as they noiselessly walked, their robes unswaying. Their concealed, almost transcendent appearances made her feel uneasy, so oftentimes she

would sit alone on the cliff, then after a while leave for the small village to play a few rounds of cards, to once again find a little joy for life.

"But later on for some reason, she once again agreed to that engagement."

Chen Changsheng continued, "In fact, I understand what she's thinking. She just wants to use me."

Xu Yourong thought to herself, this was probably after he entered Snow Mountain Sect's Secret Sect and began to display his talent. Only by seeing his limitless prospects would his fiancée change her mind. With just this single thought, her opinion of this woman had dropped even lower, to the point of shame. Proud, stupid, terrible vision; all those could still be saved, but this... was a problem of virtue.

"It's better to not have this sort of woman. Ending the engagement is the best choice."

She soothingly said to Chen Changsheng, somewhat sympathizing with his encounter.

"Yes, I was also thinking this way. Especially now, I am more and more convinced that ending the engagement is the best choice."

Chen Changsheng gazed at her as he said this. These words were meant for her.

As Xu Yourong stared into his increasingly bright eyes and listened to his slightly trembling voice, she could not help but be stunned. She was an incomparably intelligent woman, so how could she not understand what this signified? She once again felt a little flustered, and was getting more so by the second.

She thought about how she also had an engagement and that she had not even told him, and she thought that this fact was why she was flustered, but she did not know that at certain moments, the quickened beating of the heart could also easily make one flustered.

The sky was dark. The leaves of the wutong gently swayed in the breeze. The rough wood of the trunk gradually grew warm. The high platform of the mausoleum was like night.

For a very long time, there was no sound.

"Truthfully... I also have an engagement." The darkness enveloped the high platform and Xu Yourong's voice was very soft. If one was not carefully listening, it would be easy for her voice to be obscured by the gentle rustling of the leaves of the wutong tree.

"Ah?" Chen Changsheng's voice seemed very surprised, as if he could not have possibly imagined it. Then it swiftly became as dull as water.

"Is that so? So it was originally like that."

Perhaps because the emotions in his voice were too obvious, anybody could hear his sadness and disappointment, so when Xu Yourong's second sentence followed, she said it somewhat quickly. Her words were rushed, but the meaning in her words was very definite with no wavering.

"But I don't want to marry him, moreover, I definitely won't marry him."

Similarly, this was an explanation, a supplemental, a declaration, then... was it a promise?

The high platform enveloped in darkness once again grew quiet. After a while, Chen Changsheng began to laugh.

Xu Yourong was somewhat angry and ashamed. "What are you giggling about?"

Chen Changsheng replied, "Nothing."

If Tang Thirty-Six were here, he would almost certainly say something at this time: Who would believe that there was nothing between the two of you!

Chen Changsheng very quickly returned to his senses as he thought to himself, her situation is not at all like mine. Maybe I'm just overthinking things. Curious and also uneasy, he asked her, "Your... your fiancé, what sort of person is he?"

Xu Yourong softly said, "We've known each other for many years. Although later on, I would almost forget that he existed, I really did know him when we were both young. I remember very clearly that back then, he was a very annoying child."

Chen Changsheng pretended to defend him, "Little boys often cause others to feel very annoyed... I'm no exception."

Xu Yourong said, "Anyhow, because of a certain matter, I determined to have nothing more to do with him. I didn't imagine that after several years, he would come back to pester me again."

Chen Changsheng thought to himself, to conduct oneself in such a manner was truly lacking in self-respect and self-esteem.

"Over there... the engagement is a very important matter. In addition, that engagement was decided by our elders, so it's very difficult to end the engagement."

Xu Yourong thought he was a disciple of the Snow Mountain Sect in the northeast, so the 'over there' naturally indicated the Central Plains. Meanwhile, Chen Changsheng heard it as the place in the demi-human domain in which the elves had settled.

He thought to himself, the elves have suffered so many tribulations throughout their history and now very few of them remain. To reproduce and flourish was their first priority, so they could only permit marriage amongst fellow elves. This policy is inevitably somewhat harsh, but to a young woman that yearns for

true love, it truly seems rather cruel.

"Since so many years have passed... could it be... your fiancé hasn't gotten a little bit better?"

"He has not. That fool's nature has not improved one bit, or has even gotten worse."

Xu Yourong thought of those matters Shuang'er had brought up in her letters and she grew increasingly downcast. "I must admit that that fool is really outstanding in some areas, but... he has many unacceptable shortcomings."

This was the first time Chen Changsheng had heard such bitterness in her voice. He thought to himself, it seems that she really hates her fiancé.

"He gives the appearance that he doesn't care about worldly matters, that he's honest and benevolent, but in reality, he is a deep schemer and abuses money and power to meet his ends."

As she said these words, Xu Yourong was thinking about when that man first entered the capital. He had somehow managed to get in the good graces of the Bureau of Ecclesiastic Education and become a student of the Orthodox Academy. Then by making use of the conflict between the old Imperial Clan and the Divine Empress, and stirring up countless storms, he managed to stand firm in the capital and obtain massive benefits. How could such a person be some unworldly young boy from the countryside?

Chen Changsheng thought about it, then said, "To act in such a hypocritical manner is truly unbecoming."

Xu Yourong said mockingly, "And it doesn't stop there. This person is also a social climber. I don't know what... methods he used, but he managed to get in the good graces of some noble. As for further details, not even I am willing to speak more about it."

These words were obviously speaking of that person's relationship with Luoluo. Chen Changsheng sincerely said, "Logically, an acquaintance shouldn't sow discord amongst intimate friends, so I shouldn't say anything, but... this sort of man is truly unacceptable."

As he was saying these words, he was rather interested. These so-called... methods, what exactly were they?

In his view, her fiancé was an even more dangerous enemy than that senior brother of hers. She angrily complained and criticized him, but it is said that only with hope can there be disappointment. Didn't her complaints and critiques indicate that deep within her heart, she still faintly held some sort of expectation for her fiancé? He naturally wanted to know more.

Xu Yourong did not immediately answer to what he said, choosing to remain silent.

Chen Changsheng thought to himself, don't tell me that those methods are so shameless that they are even hard to talk about?

Xu Yourong was thinking about those letters that had come from the capital.

Those letters came from her dearly-trusted Shuang'er as well as Mo Yu.

In Shuang'er's letter, she had described a certain scene.

Under the lovely spring sunshine in the Orthodox Academy's library, he and that young demi-human princess were embracing each other.

In Mo Yu's letter, she had described a certain scene.

In that dragon cave below the well at New North Bridge, he and the Black Dragon turned into a girl were embracing each other.

Yes, even if he had even more faults, they could all be explained. At most, she would just end the engagement and they would become strangers to each other, but there would be no need for such a rejection. Only due to these events was she unable to accept it. If she could accept such a thing, it would inflict the greatest humiliation upon herself.

"He likes to pick the flowers and trample the grass."

(TN: womanize with others.)

She tried as much as possible to calmly and objectively state,

"Moreover, he only does so with uncomprehending young girls."

The dark mausoleum platform was quiet.

After some time had passed, there was a sudden heavy strike, and then Chen Changsheng's angry voice rang out.

"Truly a shameless piece of scum!"

# Chapter 313 - The Key Of The Black Coffin

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Very mad? That was a must.

For such a kind, quiet girl who had eyes like fresh rain over a bare mountain to actually be engaged to such a shameless man, any person would feel that it was a reckless waste, casting pearls before swine, and they would become extremely angry. However, to Chen Changsheng... this was actually a good thing. Because of the battle against the demons, the human world was actually the same as the Elf race, all caring very much about marriage. There were many young engaged people like her, and just as she had said before, an engagement was an agreement that was most respected. If there were no special circumstances, it was very difficult to break—luckily, they were both ill-matched in marriage.

This sentence seemed rather weird, but it was very reasonable. Exactly because their partners in marriage were so terrible, they had the motivation and reason to break the engagement. A problem that seemed very difficult was just solved in such an easy way. Chen Changsheng immediately felt much more at ease. He decided to follow up victory with hot pursuit by also settling the final question.

He looked into her eyes and said, “As matters stand, I will also not hide it from you anymore. Actually, I...”

The black streak seemed far away, close to the horizon, but it would arrive at the mausoleum before long. The monster tide would bring death. There was already very little time that the world had left for them. In the final moments of life, being

suddenly moved at heart was a very sad as well as lucky thing. He prepared to tell her that he was Chen Changsheng.

He believed that the entire continent knew his name, that even the far away land of demi-humans and elves should know of it.

Xu Yourong did not know that he was prepared to say his true name. She thought he was a disciple of the Snow Mountain Sect and was called Xu Sheng. Seeing how he was about to speak but suddenly stopped, as well as his slightly nervous appearance, she also began to feel nervous.

She thought he was going to confess.

She subconsciously did not want to hear it and mentally prepared herself to turn him down if he said it out loud.

It was just that... she did not want to turn him down. If he said he liked her, just exactly what could she do? Her thoughts were slightly messy, and shortly afterward, she felt very baffled. She clearly devoted herself to cultivation, so why did she think about these trivial matters right before death? Afterward, these baffled thoughts suddenly disappeared, only leaving behind peace.

There were many reasons and objectives to becoming a cultivator. Some did so to become strong, some did so to explore even more of the unknown and pursued spiritual peace, but most cultivators did so because of the two words of life and death. To not fear life or death, and as a result, escape from life and death. Why? Because between life and death, there were great fears; in

the hundreds of years of loneliness, it was possible to sink away forever. However, not long ago, she who was in the years of her youth just had a stroll between life and death.

Right now, she was at her most peaceful moment, able to see the faint worldly affairs the clearest and able to understand her inner self the most. With a pure heart of Dao, brightly lit, she looked at Chen Changsheng and waited for him to speak. Her expression was calm, but there was an extremely vague smear of bashfulness and happiness swirling in her eyes. The bashfulness was not annoyance, but only peaceful joy, because that was the Dao she pursued and wanted to cultivate.

At this moment, she was still weak, but her eyes were extremely delicate and pretty, as well as extremely firm. All of the responsibilities in the world—the historic significance of the north and south combining, fighting against the demons, her senior's truthful love, her masters' hopes, the shadow that was left by that person—as long as she was with him, all of them would be blown away by a soft breeze. She did not need to care about anything or answer to anything.

Indeed, through their journey in the Garden of Zhou, they had conversed a lot. Most of the times, it was about cultivation, books and natural landscape, and very little did they talk about the loads on their minds. They did not understand it too well, but she was already extremely confident that he was the close friend she had always searched for, and that he was the companion she needed. When she was on the edge of the cliff at the Holy Maiden Peak, she had said to the white crane that no matter if it was a gentleman or an enlightened master, none of them were the ideal partner she wanted to spend her long path of cultivation with. Right now, she

could confirm that the partner she was willing to spend her long path of cultivation with had already appeared.

Yes, this was the Dao she pursued and wanted to cultivate the most: Together. (TN: 一道 can mean both "One path/Dao" and it can also mean "together" or "side by side".)

Underneath the starry sky, advancing together, cultivating together, all the way until the end of life.

Yes, the monster tide grew closer and closer, and death also grew closer and closer. Perhaps life was almost at its end, but only because of this, and exactly because of this, she did not want to deceive her conscience even more.

The wutong tree transformed by the longbow grew in the incoming wind by the stone platform. The green leaves swayed softly in the leaves, causing the gloomy light to turn into an even softer light akin to cotton balls, as if someone had lit a candle.

Looking at her eyes, Chen Changsheng vaguely understood and opened his mouth slightly, about to speak.

Just at this moment, a green leaf suddenly fell off the tip of a branch by itself, slowly landing on his shoulder. It interrupted everything.

The reason why the green leaf on the wutong tree fell in the wind naturally was not because it was autumn, but rather because of the

trembling from the stone platform underneath.

The trembling stone platform seemed to originate from the far away depths of the grassland at first, but actually, it originated from Chen Changsheng's body.

For some unknown reason, his body began to tremble violently. His teeth chattered audibly, as if he was a patient who had suffered wind chill.

Xu Yourong was slightly alarmed and asked, "What's happening?"

Chen Changsheng could not answer her and used his right hand to quickly investigate the origin of the trembling. He held tightly onto his dagger hilt.

The violent trembling originated from the dagger at his waist.

He held tightly onto the dagger, but it continued to constantly tremble. It became faster and more frequent, all the way until the extremely simple patterning on the dagger sheath had turned into blurry lines, unable to be seen clearly.

He used more and more strength in his hand, but he was still unable to make the dagger stop. He was a little disturbed, unable to comprehend what was happening.

This was the first time he had met such a situation after Yu Ren

had gifted him the dagger.

His spiritual sense landed on the dagger hilt and attempted to regain control. However, he failed. His spiritual sense went deeper across the hilt, arriving in the space within before finally finding the origin of the trembling.

Amidst the drifting bottles of medicine, secret manuals and treasures, a black magical artifact moved at high speeds, grinding everything of what it came in contact with into fine powder. As its speed of movement increased, the black magical artifact grew hotter and hotter, as well as brighter and brighter, giving off a powerful Qi and radiance in all directions, as if it was about to turn into a sun.

This black magical artifact was the Soul Pivot from White Emperor city, and it was also the core of Zhou Dufu's mausoleum.

At this moment, it seemed to have detected something in the outside world and went berserk all of a sudden.

If Chen Changsheng's current level of cultivation had been slightly higher and his spiritual sense slightly stronger, perhaps he could attempt to use his all of his authority over the space to forcefully suppress the berserk Soul Pivot. However, right now, he did not have that sort of power and could not even make it settle down a little. If he continued to try, no matter how much time there was, he would not succeed, and this even made it highly possible for the space to suffer severely heavy damages.

Without any other ideas, he could only give up. Channeling his spiritual sense, he released that black Soul Pivot from inside.

With a quaking drone, the black soul pivot appeared on the stone platform. It gave off great radiance, illuminating every vein of the leaves on the wutong tree. It emitted an unimaginable pressure, causing Xu Yourong and Chen Changsheng to even struggle to breathe. Especially since Xu Yourong had not fully recovered from her injuries, her complexion became even paler and weaker.

Fortunately, the Soul Pivot did not stay on the stone platform for too long, and neither did it begin to attack the two of them. Even more fortunately, and incomprehensibly, the Soul Pivot clearly only became so berserk after feeling something that was currently approaching the Mausoleum of Zhou, but it did not attempt to break open the green leaves of the wutong tree and unite with it. Instead, it transformed into a ball of light, and shot into the depths of the Mausoleum of Zhou.

Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong glanced at each other and came to a tacit understanding from the looks in their eyes. He carried her on his back, and they once again entered the tomb in pursuit of the ball of light.

In the spacious and gloomy depths of the mausoleum, the huge obsidian coffin stood as quiet as a mountain in the center of the hall.

The black Soul Pivot floated in the air before the obsidian coffin and did not move at all. It gave out a dim light, reminiscent of a life lamp.

When Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong went back into the mausoleum, this was the scene they saw.

Vaguely, they heard some sounds. The sounds were very faintly discernible and very remote, as if they originated from within an abyss or the sea of stars. It was like the whisperings of a person, and also like a deep dirge.

Clearly, the sound that originated from the remote space was extremely unclear. The music was not continuous, and they could not hear its clear melody or content. However, they could feel the content that the music wanted to express.

May the spirit of the deceased return to us.

Chen Changsheng looked at the Soul Pivot in front of the obsidian coffin and asked her after staying silent for a while, “Did you hear it?”

Xu Yourong gave a soft sound of agreement and said, “It is not a hallucination. It should be some sort of leftover Qi from a formation.”

“What exactly has it sensed? I vaguely feel that it is related to the monster tide.” Chen Changsheng asked.

Before they had discovered the black Soul Pivot, as well as the time following its discovery, it was always very quiet. However, it

suddenly became so berserk, forcefully leaving Chen Changsheng's dagger, and flew in front of the black coffin and gave off some leftover Qi of an old formation. It definitely had its special reason. For an isolated object to suddenly undergo change would always be related to external factors.

Xu Yourong thought silently and said, "I have always suspected that the Soul Wood is in Nanke's hands. Looks like it's true, and she is getting closer and closer to the mausoleum."

Previously, Chen Changsheng found it very odd. The dagger could separate the real world and the world in the sheath. Instead, this Soul Pivot could feel the Qi of the outside world from inside, so what exactly was the connection that actually allowed it to penetrate the walls of space? Now, hearing her words and also thinking about the three words 'artifact, soul, unseparated' from the Nanhua Records of the Daoist Canons, he finally had a reason of cause.

The lost piece of Soul Wood was indeed in Nanke's hands. She brought the monster tide from every direction with her towards the mausoleum, growing closer and closer until the Soul Pivot sensed it.

'Artifact, soul, unseparated' could be applied to the Soul Pivot, a magical artifact that could oversee the White Emperor City, which was better known as a divine artifact. It could be imagined how intense the connection between the artifact and soul was. After an unknown about of time, the Soul Pivot finally sensed the return of the Soul Wood, so it naturally had an extremely great reaction. However, why did the Soul Pivot return before the obsidian coffin

and not fly off?

“The Soul Wood is the key.” Xu Yourong’s gaze left the Soul Pivot and landed upon the obsidian coffin. She said, “Not the key to the mausoleum, but the key to the stone coffin.”

# Chapter 314 - Secret Of The Black Coffin

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He had read the Daoist Canon since childhood, and within the books, there were iron rules. After entering the Mausoleum of Zhou, Chen Changsheng could plunder all the treasures and magical artifacts in the nine stone rooms, however, he had never thought of opening the black stone coffin. It was extremely possible for Zhou Dufu's most precious property to be hidden inside, but due to Xu Yourong's respect for the person within the coffin, he did not even consider the idea.

At this moment, only after hearing what Xu Yourong had said did he understand that even if he wanted to open the obsidian coffin earlier, it was not possible.

Only a key could open a lock. If Zhou Dufu did not want any person to disturb his long slumber, then the mountain-like obsidian coffin would naturally be very hard to open.

Xu Yourong said, "The Soul Wood should have been brought out of the Garden of Zhou very long ago, and for some unknown reason, it ended up in the hands of the demons. Thinking about it now, for them to be able to avoid the main gate of the Garden of Zhou and enter it through another path should have something to do with this. The Soul Wood has returned to the garden of Zhou, and this also means that it is finally the moment for the obsidian coffin to open."

"You say before Zhou Dufu died..." Chen Changsheng thought about how to say it, and continued, "...he already made the preparations to make it clear to the world of his property and

secrets that were hidden in the black coffin, which was why he let someone take away the key? But if it was like that, why didn't he do so directly himself?"

"You said something before which was actually very reasonable. Time is actually the greatest magical artifact." Xu Yourong looked at the obsidian coffin and said, "As known by everybody, Zhou Dufu did not have a successor. This meant that before death, he did not find a junior who he believed had the capabilities of inheriting his legacy. He left the key outside the Garden of Zhou perhaps to invite time to help him choose a successor."

He was slightly shocked and asked, "Are you saying that blade really is inside the obsidian coffin?"

Xu Yourong stayed silent for a while before saying, "There is another possibility. Like you had said, Zhou Dufu's legacy is not in the black stone coffin, but his secret is."

Chen Changsheng was confused. "I'm only asking casually, but is there really some secret?"

Xu Yourong looked into his eyes and said, "Whether Zhou Dufu has actually died or not—this itself is the most important secret of the world in the past thousand years."

Chen Changsheng thought about those deeds of Zhou Dufu that had long become stories, legends or even myths, and his gaze on the obsidian coffin grew heavier.

There was only heaviness, seriousness and some nervousness, but there was no worry. Towards matters like treasure and the legacies of previous experts, he and Xu Yourong both seemed rather calm. This type of calmness could not even be described as steadiness beyond their age. No matter how old the cultivator was, if they found out that they could obtain Zhou Dufu's legacy, they would definitely become unbelievably fanatical, just like the elder from the Setting Sun Sect who drank Xu Yourong's blood in the cave. If he had appeared before the obsidian coffin at this moment, how could he stay calm?

The reason why Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong could remain calm was because they were geniuses in cultivation, and cultivation itself was the greatest Daoist skill. Without a doubt, it was Zhou Dufu's most special treasure, but they themselves were also special. They were filled with confidence and pride—if they could inherit the legacy, it was admittedly extremely good. If they could not inherit it, it had nothing to do with fate, as their fate always lay between their hands. However, thinking that it was extremely possible for them to see the most shocking scene in the past thousand years, it was unavoidable for them to feel slightly nervous. Chen Changsheng's voice subconsciously became extremely quiet, as if he did not want to disturb the great spirit within the black coffin.

“When will this obsidian coffin open?”

Xu Yourong observed the radiance produced by the Soul Pivot grow dimmer and dimmer, and spent a while estimating. She then said, “Should be soon.”

Outside the mausoleum, the monster tide slowly surged forwards like a black line. The key to the obsidian coffin, the Soul Wood, had roused the Soul Pivot, and the opening of the coffin was about to occur right before their eyes.

Before them, the upper half of the obsidian coffin began to slowly slide.

In the gloomy, spacious mausoleum, a great wind whipped up.

The radiance emitted from the Soul Pivot became even dimmer, as if it was a candle flame that could be put out at any moment.

Chen Changsheng moved forwards to the side, and put himself between Xu Yourong and the coffin. His dagger had already left the sheath, and he held it tightly in his hand.

The huge obsidian coffin slowly opened with a rumble. A terrifying sound of grinding emitted from the heavy coffin lid and the coffin itself. It really was just like the rumble of thunder.

The mountainous black coffin slowly separated into an upper piece and a lower piece. It seemed like lightning splitting the black mountain in half.

Seeing this scene, Xu Yourong's pupil restricted slightly, and she mumbled quietly, "Halved..."

The upper part of the obsidian coffin continued to slide. It only

stopped after a very long time.

The wind continued to whistle in the mausoleum, curling around the surroundings of the obsidian coffin. Because of the change in the coffin, the wind became even more mournful in sound, even sharper. It seemed extremely gloomy, as if someone was constantly weeping in the dusky netherworld. The constant sobbing sound merged with the vague music from before, and the idea of the wish for the spirits of the deceased to return slowly subsided. However, the atmosphere grew heavier and heavier.

All of the light from the Soul Pivot was finally extinguished. The mausoleum once again returned to its gloom. Standing on the ground, they could not see the scene above, but they could imagine that the obsidian coffin had already opened. If the great man lay quietly in the coffin, perhaps he would be staring at the roof of the hall. Of course, it was even more possible that his eyes were closed, or that he had already turned into a pile of bones.

However, the person in the obsidian coffin was called Zhou Dufu. No matter how unimaginable something was, it all seemed inevitable and right for it to occur to him.

The sound of the wind slowly stopped, as did the music. The spirits of the dead had already returned, or perhaps they were not there.

The interior of the mausoleum fell into a deathly silence. Xu Yourong looked at the obsidian coffin that was like a broken mountain. Her expression was rather complicated, and she did not speak for a very long time.

Chen Changsheng's right hand that held onto the hilt of the dagger did not sweat. However, for some reason, he felt that it was sticky. This was his nervous mental state.

If the person was dead, then all was well. What if he was still alive? Or speaking more correctly, waking up from his long slumber and reviving. Or perhaps, he was unwilling to leave this world, so traveled by himself to the lonely sea of stars, and used a certain secret technique to turn himself into an immortal but extremely evil existence before death. What would happen next?

Chen Changsheng's expression remained calm, but inside, he was nervous to the extreme.

Logically, whether Zhou Dufu revived or was transformed by a secret technique, as long as he maintained his intelligence, he would help them with the demon experts and the terrifying monster tide that was getting closer and closer to the mausoleum. This was because Zhou Dufu was a human expert, an unparalleled hero who defeated the Demon Lord. This was also Xu Yourong's and his only chance at leaving the Garden of Zhou and staying alive. However, for some reason he did not know, he had a strong feeling that if Zhou Dufu really did not die, all of the people in the Garden of Zhou... would die. It could even invite a storm of blood to the entire continent.

"I want to go up and see." Xu Yourong's voice broke the silence of the mausoleum.

She looked at the obsidian coffin. Her eyes, which were slightly gloomy due to her wounds, became extremely bright.

Chen Changsheng supported her to the obsidian coffin. Raising his head for a while, he confirmed a path to climb, and carried her on his back.

A while later, he stood on the cliff of the black mountain that was broken open, and gazed inside.

The space within the obsidian coffin was extremely large. Rather than a single person, even a party could be held inside, inviting a dozen ladies to sing.

However, right now, there was not even a single person within the obsidian coffin.

Not a single person.

That person was not there.

The Garden of Zhou was Zhou Dufu's world.

The mausoleum was his palace for death.

The dangerous and mysterious Plains of the Unsetting Sun that surrounded the mausoleum was the mausoleum garden, and those unbelievably strong monsters were mausoleum guards.

Very obviously, he did not want anyone to come and disturb his long slumber. The only evidence to the contrary was the key outside the Garden of Zhou, which helped the garden choose a new owner given time.

However, he was not sleeping in this obsidian coffin.

There was still no one who had seen his corpse.

Whether he was dead or alive remained unknown.

It was extremely possible that he was still alive.

This was the true secret of the Garden of Zhou.

This was the true secret that the Plains of the Unsetting Sun wanted to guard.

The obsidian coffin did not have the remains of the great man, but that did not mean the stone coffin was empty.

It was full of tree leaves carved out of crystal, green grass sculpted from the best quality jade, and the rouge stones refined from the Earthen Essence Fire, scattered very casually.

There were countless treasures in the obsidian coffin.

Xu Yourong could enter the royal palace and Li Palace as she wished since childhood, and then went to the Holy Maiden Peak to study, so it was unknown how many treasures she had already seen. Although Chen Changsheng lived plainly since childhood, he has also once entered the Palace of Great Brilliance and the Li Palace, and had also seen the golden coral trees and starry sky that was made from luminous pearls in the Black Dragon's lair. As a result, when they saw the treasures in the previous nine stone rooms, they did not feel moved.

However, at this moment, they were really rather surprised.

It was because there was too many treasures within the obsidian coffin, and it was too wasteful. The tree leaves carved from crystals only maintained less than a tenth of their original usefulness. The best quality jade that could clearly be used to make countless pieces of beautiful artworks was instead sculpted into grass. Even worse were the rouge stones refined from Earthen Essence Fire... if this was not recklessly wasting things, what was it?

What caused them the most amazement was how these tree leaves, green grasses and stones did not even possess the slightest aesthetic value.

The treasures that were piled full in the obsidian coffin gave off a glow in the gloomy mausoleum. However, it made one feel that it was tacky.

It was definitely enough for these treasures buried with the

deceased to be worn by royal families no matter how great in authority and cultivators no matter how strong.

However, how could it be worn by the owner of this obsidian coffin?

In the imaginations of ordinary people, Zhou Dufu should have been a perfect person, especially in the aspect of manner. He was definitely able to despise the mountains and rivers, and disregard the sea of stars.

The Garden of Zhou, the Plains of the Unsetting Sun, and this grand mausoleum were all evidence.

How could such a person fill his own rock tomb with these expensive but extremely coarse treasures? Standing on the side of the obsidian tomb and seeing these golden leaves, jade leaves and blood-red rouge stones, Chen Changsheng could not help but shake his head. He squinted his eyes from the dazzling gleam of the treasure and said, “Why do I feel the air of wealth is so fierce?”

‘Air of wealth’ was a slang term from Wenshui. Tang Thirty-Six often used these three words to describe the old people in the Tianhai Clan and in the halls of the Imperial Court. Chen Changsheng heard it a lot, so he naturally remembered it.

Xu Yourong cared about the important matters, and very clearly was not impressed by the treasures in the coffin. She looked at the black coffin devoid of anyone and said after staying quiet for a while, “The place that all the cultivators that enter the Garden of

Zhou want to find the most is the Mausoleum of Zhou. We are not excluded, but I have thought about it many times. If I enter the Mausoleum of Zhou, the thing I want to do the most is to confirm whether he has died.”

Because of this, she remembered a lot. She remembered the tasks entrusted to her by her elders, and her shoulders became heavy once again.

Before on the stone platform, because of Chen Changsheng's bright eyes, she temporarily forgot this matter. It was the obsidian coffin that caused everything to return to her.

The inheritance of the Orthodoxy, the north and south combining, fighting against the demons... these matters were not limited to just her, but at this moment, this new discovery spurred her to action.

“If... you are able to leave the Garden of Zhou alive...”

She looked at Chen Changsheng, and requested extremely seriously, “Please tell the people about the news that he might still be alive.”

When she spoke, her face was extremely pale. This had nothing to do with her unhealed injuries, but rather that she had received a shock on a mental level.

Before the obsidian coffin had opened, Chen Changsheng also

had an indescribable feeling of dread of unknown origins. At this moment, when he heard her serious request about a matter, and when he saw her pale face, his confusion grew heavier and heavier. He thought that Zhou Dufu was a heroic figure, so why was she, someone who did not display admiration even to her elders, feel inexplicably very alarmed?

“He is a hero, as well as a devil.”

Xu Yourong looked at him and said, “Back then when he traveled to the north and heavily injured the Demon Lord with a single strike, he was a hero at that moment. However, he only pursued cultivation, so he killed countless human cultivators. He is cold-blooded, heartless and ruthless to the extreme. At that moment, he was a devil, and calling him an ambitious and ruthless person is more suitable. If he is still alive, and really does reappear, perhaps the continent will fall into great chaos and unrest.””

Although Chen Changsheng was familiar with the Daoist Canons, he did not have too great of an understanding of that era’s history, and understood the character of Zhou Dufu even less. Seeing that her expression was full of concern, he explained, “Not seeing his remains does not mean he is still alive. For such a legendary person, returning to the sea of stars and not leaving behind a body is possible.”

“But his blade is also not in this obsidian coffin,” Xu Yourong said.

Chen Changsheng stayed quiet after hearing that. Indeed, the blade was also missing.

Zhou Dufu relied on this blade to defeat everyone in the world and become invincible.

The blade was called Halving.

One blade, two halves.

Before the blade, no matter how strong the opponent was, no matter how tough the weapon was, even if the target was the boundless earth, it would be chopped into two halves.

Just like the obsidian coffin, like a small mountain, that slowly separated before their eyes.

The Halving Blade was second on the Tier of Legendary Weapons. It was beneath the Frost God Spear that was first.

However, to the belief of everyone on the continent, if the Frost God Spear was not the weapon that Emperor Taizong carried with him, if it did not leave behind so many miraculous scenes in the war between humans and demons, it definitely would not have been able to suppress the Halving Blade on the Tier of Legendary Weapons. In other words, in the hearts of ordinary people, the Halving Blade was the true weapon that occupied first place on the Tier of Legendary Weapons.

This was because outside Luoyang City, Taizong's Frost God Spear had suffered defeat under Zhou Dufu's Halving Blade.

If Zhou Dufu had really died, transformed into a wisp of azure smoke and returned to the sea of stars without leaving behind remains, his blade should have been left in this obsidian coffin.

Since the blade was not in the obsidian coffin, it should have been by his side. Was it the most important evidence that he was alive?

Xu Yourong did not continue to think about this matter, and began to face the monster tide that would soon arrive, as well as making preparations for future matters. She looked at him and said, “Nanke is the disciple of Black Robe, and also has the key to the Mausoleum of Zhou. That piece of Soul Wood is in her hands. Black Robe and Zhou Dufu are people of the same period, so it is impossible for him to be surnamed Zhou. However, it is very obvious that Black Robe and Zhou Dufu should have some sort of relationship.”

Chen Changsheng was slightly confused as to why she said these things to him.

Xu Yourong looked into his eyes and said, “If you are able to leave the Garden of Zhou alive, remember that you must tell this discovery to the entire world. This will be a great help to finding the true identity of Black Robe, and to the battle of humans against the demons. It may even hold some importance in deciding the victor.”

This was her second request to him.

To request that if he lived, he had to do that.

Then firstly, she was requesting him to live. Even if he had to ignore her, he had to live, and take this news out of the Garden of Zhou.

The phoenix was about to die. Its cry was also loud.

If this was a normal situation, Chen Changsheng would be moved by her calmness and resoluteness, or agree to her request without any hesitation at all, and then use all he could to leave the Garden of Zhou alive. However, this time, after spending so much time together running, and after the conversation they had on the stone platform, in the green wutong tree, he was unable to accept her request.

“Even if I leave you behind in the mausoleum and try to break through the monster tide and leave alive, it is basically impossible.” Looking into Xu Yourong’s eyes, he said, “Impossible, and I have to betray my nature. I am unwilling, because I cultivate the Dao of following my heart.”

Under the shadow of death brought by the monster tide, what could he do to follow his heart at this moment? He wanted to accompany her, either to escape, or to die here.

Xu Yourong’s complexion was slightly pale. She was unable to accept his decision, but her gaze was still very warm, happy for the decision he made.

Chen Changsheng did not give her any more opportunities to persuade him, and returned the dagger to the sheath. He began to pack away those golden leaves, jade grass and blood-red rouge stones in the obsidian coffin.

These treasures indeed were overly tacky. Although the sculpting work was good, their aesthetics were sub-par. However, they were all made of material of the best quality and were extremely valuable. Since Zhou Dufu was not dead, this could not be considered as grave-robbing—thus he avoided the iron rules in the three thousand Daoist Canons.

Of course, the reason he was willing to avoid them like so was because he could feel that the Black Dragon in the lake water outside his Ethereal Palace had already showed signs of waking. He did not want to be severely reprimanded by the ill-tempered uncle. The feeling of being cursed and berated could not feel good, and the feeling of being covered in dragon spittle was surely also very bad.

The dagger entered the sheath and its blade was hidden, however, it was still able to sweep everything. At the end of the sheath, the gold leaves, jade grasses and blood-red rouge stones all disappeared one by one, being collected without a sound.

After finishing these things, he carried Xu Yourong and was about to come down from the obsidian coffin. Suddenly, Xu Yourong saw something, and gave out a surprised cry.

He turned around and followed her gaze. He only saw that the obsidian coffin was empty of treasure and had nothing in it.

On a certain wall within the obsidian coffin, there were some vague lines carved in.

These lines were not patterns, and seemed like words.

Some lines also seemed like images.

# Chapter 315 - The Birth Of A Miracle

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The piece of black wood in Nanke's hand suddenly began to glow.

She lowered her head and gazed at that black wood that now seemed like a piece of jade for a very long time, her expression abnormally focused but indifferent as usual. Even her somewhat dull eyes gradually began to grow brighter.

Through this black piece of wood, she clearly perceived that a connection had been formed between her and that tall and distant mausoleum.

There was something within the mausoleum that was incessantly calling out to the Soul Wood, and at the same time inviting her.

Before she entered these Plains of the Unsetting Sun, she did not know what this black wood her teacher had given her was made of, but now she knew everything.

This was the core of the Mausoleum of Zhou, or a part of its core. The other part lay within the Mausoleum of Zhou.

She could not use this black wood to control the Mausoleum of Zhou, but she could use it control that tide of monsters behind her.

The connection sent out by that distant mausoleum made her feel certain that it was the Mausoleum of Zhou. Simultaneously, if her expectations were not off, Xu Yourong and Chen Changsheng were

also in that mausoleum.

At this moment, she felt some gratitude towards Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong.

If Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong were not in front of them leading the way, she would have never found the Mausoleum of Zhou, and she would never have been able to get close to it and thus form a connection between the Soul Wood and the Soul Pivot.

It must be known that not even her teacher could overcome these dense grasslands and find the location of the Mausoleum of Zhou.

Nanke's eyes shone brighter and brighter. They no longer possessed their normal dullness. It was as though a flame had been lit within them.

The mausoleum contained Zhou Dufu's legacy.

Only she herself could know just how important Zhou Dufu's legacy was to her master.

From her standpoint, the legacy within that mausoleum, even the mausoleum itself, these Plains of the Unsetting Sun, and the entire Garden of Zhou should all belong to her teacher.

The world that had been accidentally left behind by her teacher. Today, she would finally take it all back.

Different from Nanke, the Demon General couple of Teng Xiaoming and Liu Wan'er felt even more sorrowful that Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong were able to find this mausoleum.

It must be known that ever since the Garden of Zhou had first appeared, several hundred years had passed. Countless human and demon cultivators, brimming with talent and possessing staunch wills, had come to this place in search of the Mausoleum of Zhou, but not a single one had succeeded.

The Military Advisor's understanding of the Garden of Zhou far surpassed that of the human Saints, yet even he could not do it.

Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong had done it.

Indeed, they were truly worthy of being the future of humanity.

For the Military Advisor to plan so far ahead, to consume so many resources and expend so much effort, all to kill these young humans in the Garden of Zhou, it really was very reasonable.

At a certain place in the Plains of the Unsetting Sun, the reeds and grass had been cut down by some sort of sharp implement and had been thickly spread out to form an extremely large island. It seemed like resting upon its surface would be very comfortable.

Qi Jian leaned against a pile of grass, her pale small face filled with terror as she stared at a certain direction in the sky. Her eyes,

which were already rather gloomy from her severe injuries, grew even darker.

At the moment, it was almost twilight. Logically, the sky should have been filled with a warm and red glow, but it was dark and gloomy at present.

It was not dark and gloomy due to clouds bespeaking rain, but because there was a massive shadow that blocked out the entire sky.

In the strong winds of the high heavens, the massive shadow seemed to slowly move up and down just like a pair of wings.

Only... how in the world could there possibly be such a massive bird that its wingspan alone could obstruct ten thousand li of the sky? How could the world possibly contain this sort of being?

Could it be that this was the legendary... no, the mythological great peng?

It was said in the far west, past the Great Western Continent, upon the boundless sea, there lived a strange beast called the great peng. It was said that when it opened its wings, they stretched out for ten thousand li.

It was said that the great peng was incredibly powerful, already half a step into the Saint realm. Even the powerful Saint experts of the human world would find it very difficult to prevail against it.

How did this terrifying great peng end up living in the Garden of Zhou? Where did it normally conceal itself? Why did it not break out of the Garden of Zhou and leave? If it could not, what sort of strength within these plains forbade it from doing so?

The more Qi Jian thought about it, the more she was shocked and the paler her small face became.

Over these successive dozens of days of continuous flight, the wound on her abdomen had already healed, but her internal injuries had not improved and even gradually worsened. Her mind received such a shock that she began to laboriously cough.

At some point, Zhexiu had come over with a bowl of herbal soup, which he now put in front of her and said, "Drink."

Still as concise and straightforward as ever.

It was easy to see that in journeying together over these weeks, Qi Jian had grown very familiar and dependent on him. Coupled with her weakness from her injuries, and she very naturally began to give off the appearance of a daughter at home. Like the whining of a spoiled child, she said, "So bitter, and it's not like it does anything."

Zhexiu had said before that if Chen Changsheng were here, he would assuredly be able to treat his poison and cure her injuries; but in fact, he lived out his childhood in the snowy plains, battling for a living, so whether it was injury or sickness, he had always had

to find medicinal herbs on his own. If this was outside the Garden of Zhou, even if Qi Jian had suffered an even worse sword wound, he was still certain that he could have cured her. The problem was that they were in the Plains of the Unsetting Sun. The variety of plants that grew between the pools of water and dry land was not diverse. The vast majority were weeds or reeds, and it was difficult to find appropriate herbs. The herbal soup that Zhexiu had made for these past few days was made from kudzu leaves and tubers, which he worked very hard to find. The taste was truly awful and the medicinal strength was average, but... drinking was always better than not drinking.

So upon hearing Qi Jian's grumbling and whining, he answered very simply and directly. "If you don't drink, I'll spank you."

Qi Jian's small face blushed and her left hand subconsciously reached behind her back.

It was obvious that this dialogue—the whining and complaining, the short and concise answer—had already taken place many times over the past few days.

There was an even a chance that he really had spanked her, just like spanking a small child.

Zhexiu's way was very useful, and in addition, Qi Jian did not seem to have a bad reaction to it. She seemed to like him lecturing her with a few cold words.

Like a small animal, she drew close to his hand and began to

drink the soup. For some reason, she felt that there was a hint of sweetness in that medicinal brew.

After finishing the medicinal soup, her wounds were aggravated by the medicine and she began to cough once more. On her pale face appeared two ominous patches of red. It seemed extremely painful.

Zhexiu moved behind her and used his right hand to grasp her neck. In accordance with the method Chen Changsheng had described to him in the Mausoleum of Books, he began to slowly insert true essence into her body.

He had already done this many times and was very practiced with it.

The island formed of reeds and weeds was silent.

Qi Jian's eyes were closed as her body trembled, her face pale.

Zhexiu would occasionally open his eyes and gaze into the distance.

He could not see anything, but he was used to being vigilant.

In addition, it was only when Qi Jian closed her eyes that he could open his.

Because deep within his eyes, the dark green flame indicating the poison had grown even deeper occupied nearly the entirety of his irides. It was so gorgeous a sight that it would make one's heart beat faster.

If he could not leave these plains and could not leave the Garden of Zhou, perhaps his eyes would never recover.

He did not tell Qi Jian about this.

After some time, Zhexiu removed his hand from Qi Jian's back.

Qi Jian gave two light coughs and sensed that the true essence was flowing a little more smoothly through her body and not as aggravating as it was before.

"What do we do next?" She softly asked Zhexiu, her expression rather sheepish, as though she was worried that this question would affect his emotions.

Zhexiu turned his eyes to that terrifying shadow that hung over the distant horizon but said nothing. In the past few days, they had not met a single monster, and the plains had been abnormally quiet. He knew that it definitely had something to do with that massive shadow in the sky, but he just did not know what was happening in the distance.

"There must definitely have been other human cultivators that came in." Qi Jian said, "Perhaps that shadow is part of the demons'

plan. Should we head over there to help out?"

"No." Zhexiu said, "Regardless of it being a ploy by the demons, it has nothing to do with us."

Qi Jian opened her eyes wide and said in confusion, "But... there might be human cultivators that are being attacked at this very moment."

Zhexiu replied, "First of all, that place is too far away, so we wouldn't make it in time. Secondly, we can't beat that great peng. Thirdly, I am not a human cultivator, so I have no obligation to help those people. Lastly, if I'm not wrong, this matter is possibly our only opportunity to escape from these plains."

Qi Jian gazed at his profile, wanting to say something, but in the end she chose to keep silent.

She had been raised in the Mount Li Sword Sect since she was a child, and the teachings that had been passed on to her made it impossible for her to ignore seeing humans attacked by demons. However, Zhexiu's words were far too reasonable. Moreover, the most crucial point was that she knew very well that in fleeing through these plains, she had been his burden, so she had not the slightest qualification to request that he take on even more risks.

"The most important thing is that your injuries are too severe. If we don't think of a way, you will die very quickly." Zhexiu said impassively to her.

Seeing his face, Qi Jian was suddenly very aggrieved. She thought to herself, I'm about to die, so how can you remain so calm?

Zhexiu had no idea what she was thinking as he continued, "I just smelled upon the water that two li ahead of us should be several stalks of Drunken Sour Grass.

Qi Jian's expression was a little strange. "What's that?"

Zhexiu replied, "A sort of weed. If a monster or warhorse mistakenly eats it as food, they'll fall unconscious."

An unpleasant idea suddenly popped up in Qi Jian's mind. "You... who are you planning on feeding that to?"

"Of course it's for you to eat."

Zhexiu felt that this question of hers was extraordinarily stupid and slightly creased his brow. "Right now, you're consuming too much of your mental strength. For some reason, you've really enjoyed talking these past few days. It's very obvious that it's because your injuries are gradually worsening. Just eat the Drunken Sour Grass and sleep for a while. Although it won't do anything for your wound, it will at the very least allow you to hold on for a bit longer."

Qi Jian was quiet for a while and then very carefully asked, "This weed... have you eaten it before?"

Zhexiu expressionlessly said, "After eating this weed, you'll fall into a state of deep unconsciousness. Even a little earth mouse could eat you, so of course I wouldn't have eaten it before."

Qi Jian was a little angry. "But you want me to eat it."

Zhexiu said, "I won't be sleeping, so you will naturally be safe."

This was a simple and objective explanation, but in the ears of a fourteen-year-old girl, it seemed just like a promise. This made her feel very warm.

"After I eat that grass, how long will I sleep?" She asked.

After a moment of silence, Zhexiu replied, "I've never seen a human eat it before, so... I don't know."

Qi Jian was also quiet for a while and then faintly said, "But you want me to eat it?"

These were the same words, their meaning was the same, but the emotion behind them had subtly changed.

"There's no poison, so there won't be any problem."

"I don't want to eat it."

"If my predictions are correct, eating that grass will let you hold on for another ten days."

"But I might sleep for a hundred days or a thousand days."

"Do all humans like to exaggerate so much?"

"Anyway, I don't want to eat it." Qi Jian firmly said.

Zhexiu did not know why she was so stubborn. After silently pondering on this matter, he once again used his tried and true method. "If you don't eat it, I'll spank you."

In the past few weeks, there were many occasions, such as when eating bitter herbs, or her insisting on holding him before she would sleep; or her stubbornly insisting on washing his face every morning and then at night just as stubbornly insisting that he did not need to help wash her feet; the moment where their opinions diverged and were incapable of meeting together. At the very end, he would always use this method.

Over the course of their journey, he had long ago realized that this last disciple of the Mount Li Sword Sect's sect master, the most junior lady of the Divine State's Seven Laws, was not at all like the cute and spoiled girl that he had imagined. She had a stubborn nature, firm and persistent, even pigheaded. Let alone hitting her, even threatening to abandon her would not change her mind.

She was only afraid of getting spanked.

Zhexiu did not know why this was the case. He clearly knew that it was the place where the flesh was most abundant and thus beating it was the least painful.

Perhaps it was because she was a girl.

He had read human books before and knew about these sort of things, but he still could not understand.

Recalling Qi Jian's attitude on this journey, he felt that humans were truly vexing, especially women.

Why did she insist on washing his face every day? On the snowy plains, one could never find this much water. Isn't it fine to just randomly pick up a chunk of snow and rub it over your face? And if not, then so what? It's not good for your facial skin? You've suffered such severe injuries that you're on the verge of death, so what does worrying about such things matter? Why is it that she won't let me wash her feet every night? Could it be that she doesn't know that on a long and difficult trek, the most important thing is to ensure that your feet are clean and dry, and that only this way can you walk even farther? Fine, this entire time it had been him carrying her, so she didn't need to walk, but then there was really no reason for why she should care so much about this feet-washing business.

It was a good thing that women would always be afraid of something.

Like spanking.

Hearing Zhexiu's words, Qi Jian's small face blushed in shame. Yet beyond expectations, she continued to insist on being unwilling. In a huff, she replied, "Don't want to eat is don't want to eat."

Hearing her clear and young, but unhappy, voice, Zhexiu was a little surprised. He thought to himself, what's happened, today you aren't even afraid of getting spanked anymore?

He thought about how, a few days ago, on the first and only occasion he had spanked her, he was somewhat dazed, so his right hand had subconsciously brushed against her legs.

Seeing his action, Qi Jian ashamedly and angrily threw a fist at his shoulder.

However, she was simply too enervated, so this fist naturally had no power, nor did it seem like she was throwing a tantrum.

"Don't be afraid."

Zhexiu thought he had guessed at the reason for her unwillingness and attempted to make his voice as soothing as possible. "As long as I'm alive, I will absolutely carry you out of here."

Qi Jian stretched out her hand and grabbed at the hem of his clothes; she then opened her eyes wide and gave him a miserable look. "But who will give you directions?"

Zhexiu couldn't see her appearance. "The shadow is over there, so we travel in the opposite direction."

Having said that, he stood up, put her on his back, and walked out of that island formed of reeds and weeds towards those stalks of Drunken Sour Grass.

Qi Jian hugged him, her small face leaning on his shoulders. She said nothing, making her thoughts a mystery.

Right now, she was very feeble and would often get tired. In the past few days, when on his back, she would very quickly fall asleep.

He was not very tall and his shoulders were not very broad, but they gave her a very steady feeling, just like a boat that would never capsize in the ocean.

But today she did not want to sleep. She resisted the exhaustion and the weakness and calmly gazed at the sky.

Zhexiu sensed it and stopped walking. After a moment of silence, he asked, "You really don't want to sleep?"

Qi Jian tacitly approved of his thoughts.

She always felt that if she ate those stalks of grass and fell unconscious, then she would only wake up after a very, very long time.

Who would give you directions?

When I wake up, will I be able to see you?

If we don't leave these plains, could it be that I will die in my sleep?

I don't want to.

If she had to die, it would be best to do so while awake. Only in this way could she be certain that they were together.

Because of her silence, Zhexiu was also silent.

He did not know what she was thinking, but he knew that she was definitely thinking about a lot of meaningless things.

Humans were truly vexing, especially women.

No matter the age.

It was now the time when the twilight should be dying the sky a

bloody red, but the distant sky was dark and gloomy like a cloudy day.

He lifted his head and gazed into the distance, sensing and confirming the direction.

After doing these preparation, he lifted his right hand, wielded his palm like a knife, and chopped down on Qi Jian's neck.

With a light slap, Qi Jian fell unconscious.

The entire world was quiet.

In the Garden of Zhou, there was a plain. The plain's sun did not set, but it had been covered up by a terrifying shadow. Outside of the Garden of Zhou was a snowy plain. The sun did not rise over this snowy plain, and a shadow similarly hung over the night sky. Compared to that terrifying shadow in the plains, this shadow covered an even larger area. It did not seem angry, but it was even more frightening in terms of its cold presence. It faintly emitted an unequaled Qi.

The shadow was the Demon Lord's will. Under this shadow, the already awesome strength of the Demon General grew even stronger. This shadow turned array spread several dozens li out to those normal demon soldiers, inspiring them with incredible bravery. Regardless of how dazzling those sword glows in the snowstorm were, they would not feel the slightest fear.

The only people who could remain completely uninfluenced by this shadow were two people. One of them was Su Li, while the other was the demon Military Advisor whose entire body was cloaked in a black robe.

Black Robe sat cross-legged on a snowy hill. In front of his knees was an iron plate. In this plate were mountains, plains, and rivers, a cold pool and a wetland, and even a setting sun, but there were no stars. It was the Garden of Zhou.

Suspended above the iron plate were four life lamps. Those four life lamps were already extremely weak, the two life lamps in the middle were especially so, their life flames like thin threads. At any time, they could be blown out.

More than ten li away in the snowstorm, a magnificent sword glow shuttled back and forth between heaven and earth, but it could never escape.

The mountainous figures of several Demon Generals towered in the snowstorm. They led tens of thousands of demon troops in pursuit of the sword glow, in pursuit of that human at the head of that sword glow.

Su Li was not very old, but he was actually the Mount Li Sword Sect's martial granduncle. His seniority was unusually high, but what was even higher was his swordplay and cultivation.

He was not a Saint. He was a wastrel, wandering the four seas, occasionally revealing himself to the world.

He was not ranked in the Storms of the Eight Directions because no one knew where his desires lay.

Yet everyone knew that his cultivation was ranked at the very top of the human world, at eye-level with the Saints, on par with the Storms.

It could even be said that because of his temperament, solely based on his battle power, killing ability, and his menace towards the Demon race, he was second only to Zhou Dufu.

In order to kill Su Li, the demons had prepared for a very long time and had mentally prepared to sacrifice countless experts. In fact, right now, one Demon General had already been killed, while three Demon Generals were heavily wounded.

Even the Demon Lord spared no expense in exerting his black night, transforming his will into a shadow that enveloped the sky.

Yet Black Robe seemed very calm. From beginning to end, he had sat cross-legged on the snowy hill. Only when Su Li would express killing intent towards him would he take action.

The reason he was so calm was because he believed in himself.

The assassination using the Garden of Zhou had been personally planned by him. There were no gaps and he had calculated everything precisely.

No matter how strong Su Li was, he was still a man and not a god. He was not Zhou Dufu.

Only if in his desperate straits, the fear and pressure brought on by being between life and death causing him to have a breakthrough, was there a chance. Otherwise, there was no way for him to escape alive.

Yet Black Robe did not give him even this chance.

Black Robe had prepared a pot of warm water for Su Li, a slowly moving grindstone.

Of course, he logically would have to always keep his full attention on this assassination in the snowstorm. After all, the person he wanted to kill was Su Li.

Yet, a few moments ago, a change had suddenly occurred in the square plate in front of him.

In the dense grassland in that place that was impossible to search or infer, which from beginning to end had been a place of nothingness and mirages, something suddenly exploded with brilliant light.

This light illuminated Black Robe's face, penetrating through his pale skin and making the green color hidden within grow even richer before revealing two smears of red.

The intersection of these three colors was very pretty and very strange.

Those two eyes that were as deep as the netherworld were also illuminated by the light.

The blood on his face, the light in his eyes; all of this signified his excitement.

What sort of thing would cause a person like Black Robe to grow excited?

Previously, when he saw Chen Changsheng's life lamp and Xu Yourong's life lamp head into the plains together, his expression had become solemn.

But now, he had already forgotten about that matter.

Even if Xuelao City were to abruptly collapse, even if Su Li was to suddenly pierce through the snowy sky and escape, he would not be the slightest bit moved.

There was nothing new under the night sky. No matter how outlandish a thing was, they were all just the result of small probabilities, but this light was different.

He gazed for a very long time in silence at that ball of light in the

iron plate.

He had already given up any hope he had for this miniature world, which was why he could look at it all so indifferently.

Yet he had already waited for this light to appear for many years.

The plot involving the Garden of Zhou was obviously not the best plan Black Robe had ever created.

Several hundred years ago, the combined forces of the humans and demi-humans had successively broken through five of the demons' defensive lines and were only five hundred li from Xuelao City. Hermit Qilian died in battle, and Hermit Helan also died in battle. The situation was exceptionally grave.

He developed an extremely enjoyable plan.

This plan was him playing with the human heart. He used the relationship between Emperor Taizong and Wang Zhice.

The entire continent knew what he aimed to do. Emperor Taizong and Wang Zhice were even more clear on it, and yet they could not stop him.

Because problems of the human heart, once they appeared, could never be wiped away.

Wang Zhice sadly resigned from his post.

Xuelao City was safe and sound.

Compared to that plan, whether it was in terms of structure or ideas, the plot in the Garden of Zhou could not even hope to match up.

But to Black Robe, the plot in the Garden of Zhou was even more meaningful than the one from prior.

To lose, and then to bring back. This had always been the most meaningful matter.

All the things he had done over the countless years was for this.

The light in the iron plate was not in his plans. It was the greatest variable in this plan and also the most welcomed variable.

Because it meant that the Garden of Zhou's most precious object was about to see the light of day once more.

Killing Su Li. Killing off the greater part of humanity's future.

Retrieving his lost past.

What could be more perfect than this conclusion?

Deep within the mausoleum, on the obsidian coffin.

The Soul Pivot shone no more and the precious jewels had all been stored away. The obsidian coffin was pitch black like a dark night.

Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong walked into this darkness and came before the marks.

The characters comprised letters and pictures.

Each one was matched with a corresponding picture. Other than a child's most beloved picture-book, there was another most commonly seen possibility.

These characters and words were a secret technique.

Yes.

Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong glanced into each other's eyes. Because of their shock, they did not know what to say.

The secret technique engraved into the coffin was a blade style.

This blade style had the same name as that blade.

**Halving.**

The halving of the one blade, two halves.

# Chapter 316 - Learning The Blade

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The sword was the most commonly seen weapon, as well as the weapon that held the greatest status. To countless sects and schools, their greatest Daoist skills were sword techniques. The reason why the Longevity Sect could control countless other sects, and why it truly had the confidence in allowing this southern sect to become important enough to contend against the Li Palace, was still because of the Mount Li Sword Sect, perhaps because of this reason.

The blade was normally only used in the army, to kill the enemy on the battlefield. It was always unqualified to take a place in the higher circles, until a thousand years ago, when Zhou came into being. Only after he had used the blade to defeat all the experts in the world did a change in this situation occur. However, after Zhou Dufu, there were still very few famous people that used the blade.

Why was it like that? It was because Zhou Dufu's blade was too sharp, and also because he had created his own universally shocking blade technique.

This blade technique was named the same as his blade: Halving.

This was the legendary Halving Blade Technique.

Looking at those words and images on the wall of the obsidian coffin, Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong were both dumbstruck. There was always the rumor that Zhou Dufu's legacy was in the Garden of Zhou. Only after seeing it with their own eyes did they

confirm that this rumor turned out to be real.

Compared to this blade technique, the secret manuals of martial arts, valuable pills and treasures from the nine stone rooms were not worthy of being mentioned at all. Time indeed was very strong. It could cause pills to lose effectiveness and treasures to dull, but it could not cause intelligence and knowledge to depreciate. Without a question, the Halving Blade Technique was the first-rate intelligence and knowledge in the world of cultivation.

They were willing to hear the truth even if they had to die for it. The monster tide was currently approaching the mausoleum, and the huge shadow in the sky that represented death was about to envelop them. Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong had completely forgotten about these matters, and began to read and view the words and images on the wall of the coffin. They wished that they could learn even more in their final moments.

Their gazes landed at the beginning of the text. This was the entire outline of the Halving Blade Technique. The words were extremely clear and easy to understand, however, the ideas they presented were actually extremely profound. In the images created from the words, there was the perspective of a simple blade, an edge connecting with the world. It was a hitherto unimagined way of looking at things. This was truly a uniquely and finely written article.

The Halving Blade Technique had a total of one hundred and eight blade moves, forming three parts. The entire outline called them sections, and each section had thirty-six blade moves.

The first section was named “[Rise](#)”, and it detailed the one word. How to raise the blade, how to raise the edge, how to create wind, and how to begin the technique were all the most basic parts in the section. It was also the section that had the most on manner. The second section was called “[Endure](#)”, and mainly focused on defense. If trained to the limit, it could endure the changes of the world, but the thirty-six styles did not only focus on defense. The edge of the blade was hidden within it, like a dragon in the clouds, able to reach out and eat people at any moment. As a result, it was the steadiest and most dangerous section. The third section was called “[Fall](#)”. This word, fall, could easily describe the fall of the blade, but actually, it carried the definition of extracting from the heavens. Wherever the edge of the blade went, it possessed the vast image of an azure sky, able to envelop the world and cut through everything before the eye.

(TL: The first section is “Rise” 起, which can hold a lot of different meanings. Basically, the author is doing some wordplay for the how to xxx part. They all contain the word 起. In the third section, “Fall” (落), basically it is saying that the 落 is referring to 碧落, which means heavens, and has nothing to do with actually falling.)

After reading the entire outline of the Halving Blade Technique, Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong did not stop at all, and began to look at an image and the words on it closely afterward. That was the first move from the section “Rise”.

This was also the first move of the Halving Sword Technique. It had an especially simple name: [Origin](#).

(TL: Again, more word play. The Chinese name is 缘起, which again has 起 (“Rise”), but has nothing to do with actually rising.)

The image did not have a blade, nor did it have someone using the blade. There were only several simple lines.

Chen Changsheng had the experience from comprehending monoliths in the Mausoleum of Books, and Xu Yourong had the homework of studying and comprehending monoliths every day at the Holy Maiden Peak. They each had their own perspectives, and understood that these lines were pathways that true essence could travel in, and at the same time, blade intent. However, exactly because it was simple, it was difficult to comprehend. The images of very few lines on the coffin walls caused them to be immersed, and they actually slowly forgot the flow of time. This lasted all the way until a certain moment when the two of them finally comprehended this blade move, and woke up at almost the same time. They subconsciously looked at each other, and saw the astonishment in each other's hearts.

When the metal blade left the sheath and was raised into the vast sky, no matter how they looked at it, it was a very simple action, so how could there be so many complicated changes? How could these complicated changes be remembered and used in battle? This blade technique was just like Zhou Dufu, extremely overbearing but also profound and confusing. To their knowledge and experience, it felt outrageous.

Other than the fact that Zhou Dufu was an expert who possessed the intelligence that exceeded normal people, there were no other reasonable explanations.

This seemingly simple first move of the “Rise” section actually

caused them to spend a lot of effort before finally grasping it. Of course, once they had comprehended the move, they were suddenly overcome by an onrush of fierce delight, like water bursting from a silver vase, or horsemen charging forward. It caused them to feel a period of carefreeness, and they actually wanted to yell loudly a few times to release their wonderful feelings.

Xu Yourong and Chen Changsheng only looked at each other quietly, and the shock in their eyes slowly turned into uneasiness. They had used this much time only on the first move, so just how much more time did they need to comprehend the entirety of the one hundred and eight blade moves to the level that they could use it smoothly and fluently? Currently, their biggest problem was that they did not have time.

If it was just not enough time, they could just try to remember as many moves as they could. However, as mentioned before, the Halving Blade Technique was a unique, finely-written article and its most special area was that although the one hundred and eight moves seemed separate, they were actually one whole entity. Only after all of the blade moves were completely comprehended could the idea of the article be known.

Even when they seemed to grasp the first move, this type of fluency was far from enough, and could not even be considered as a true fluency.

“Memorize first.” Chen Changsheng looked at her and said, “Make use of all the time we have and remember all of these words and images.”

Even if it was not comprehending, and only copying this blade technique into their minds, it was still an extremely difficult matter.

Xu Yourong calculated the amount of time the monster tide would take to arrive and the amount of time she needed to memorize all of it, and confirmed that it was not enough. She said, “Memorize separately.”

“Okay.” Chen Changsheng looked at her slightly pale face, and paused a little before saying, “I’ll memorize from the end, you memorize from the beginning.”

If the blade technique was said to be an article, reading from the beginning to the end was naturally easier than the opposite. Memorizing was even more so.

Xu Yourong knew that he thought about how she had not recovered from her injuries, and intentionally did this. She did not decline, and walked before the images and words of the second move. She began recording it in her head.

Chen Changsheng glanced at her and confirmed that she could stand by herself for a little while now. He walked to the left side of the obsidian coffin, before the last image.

This was the last move of the “Fall” section. It had an especially overbearing name: The World Ablaze.

His gaze landed on the lines of the image, and at the same time, those words entered his eyes.

With only a moment, the images and words disappeared. The image of a dusky sky appeared before him. There were falling stars everywhere with long, fiery tails, as if the world was about to be destroyed...

In the next moment, he discovered that the paths of the falling stars were actually somewhat familiar. He remembered that these paths were actually the energy of the first move of the Halving Blade Technique, Origin. As it turned out, the very end and the very beginning were indeed connected. He finally confirmed the content of the entire outline. This blade technique actually required the mastery of all blade moves to grasp it.

The blade technique was a whole entity that could not be divided. In other words, the one hundred and eight blade moves in the Halving Blade Technique were actually one blade.

As it should be.

Only with one blade could there have been two halves.

# Chapter 317 - Facing It Together

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The obsidian coffin was colossal, similar to a small mountain. Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong stood within the coffin, as though they were standing within a mountain. They were unsure of how much time had passed.

Xu Yourong followed the normal order, and viewed the images one by one. Her footsteps moved slowly, from left to right. Chen Changsheng's order was the opposite of hers, and slowly moved from right to left. Memorizing was much easier than comprehending and grasping it, but to memorize such profound and indescribable sword moves was not an easy task.

After an unknown period of time, Chen Changsheng's left arm touched her shoulder. Only then did the two return to her senses and realize that they had already met again.

If it was Tang Thirty-Six, he would probably frivolously and cockily comment, "What a coincidence, actually meeting you here."

However, Chen Changsheng did not speak in this manner, and Xu Yourong also did not speak. The two of them glanced at each other and smiled, before continuing to look at the final two images.

This was Chen Changsheng's sixty-ninth image. This meant that he had already memorized sixty-nine images. Due to her injuries, Xu Yourong was rather weak, and saw fewer images than him.

Altogether, she had memorized thirty-seven blade moves.

After another period of time, the pair had finally memorized the final two images, and once again woke up at almost the same time. They once again looked at each other and smiled.

However, in the next moment, their smiles vanished and were replaced with shock and bewilderment.

The images and words on the obsidian coffin were currently... disappearing!

Obsidian was the hardest type of rock in the world, and these lines of images and texts should have been carved onto it by Zhou Dufu with his legendary divine blade. It was deeply carved into the rock to some degree, and even after undergoing the rubbings of hundreds of years, it did not grow faint, much less eroded. However, at this moment, the edge of these lines seemed to grow softer by a lot. With a soft brushing of the gloomy breeze in the mausoleum, the obsidian at the edge of these lines was blown into grains of sand and fell onto the ground with a rustle.

At that moment, Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong were not able to react at all. All of the words and images of the obsidian coffin wall were completely erased, turning into one hundred and nine depressions which varied slightly in depth.

What was this about? This magical scene caused both of them to be shocked speechless. Did this mean that the Halving Blade Technique would disappear by itself after it was memorized? Just

how did Zhou Dufu do such a magical thing?

The Halving Blade Technique had already transformed into the black sand at the bottom of the coffin and had completely vanished. The interior of the obsidian coffin had become completely empty, so they naturally did not stay any longer.

Chen Changsheng carried her out of the obsidian coffin, and returned to the stone floor of the mausoleum. They were still unable to calm down as they thought about the previous events.

“Luckily it was memorized.” Xu Yourong said, “After we leave, we can record these moves, and it will be complete.”

Due to living in the old temple in Xining Village since childhood, Chen Changsheng, a fifteen-year-old teenager, naturally could not avoid being slow-witted on matters between males and females. However, for some reason, at this moment, he understood what she said correctly. The earth-shattering Halving Blade Technique had now belonged to the two of them, and it was not separately belonging to each of them. Just like the blade technique, the entirety of it belonged to both of them.

If they did not have enough trust and did not treat each other with sincerity, there was no point to this blade technique.

“Yes, we can practice together,” Chen Changsheng said.

“If we can’t leave the Garden of Zhou, what should we do?” asked

Xu Yourong gazed at his clear eyes, seemingly slightly sad. “Perhaps this blade technique will leave the world with us?”

Chen Changsheng replied, “Don’t feel pressured. If Zhou Dufu really is still alive, the Halving Blade Technique naturally won’t be lost in inheritance.”

Xu Yourong stayed silent for a moment and then said, “I have a different theory. If Zhou Dufu did not die, why would he leave these sword moves in his own mausoleum?”

Chen Changsheng pondered , then guessed, “Perhaps he wanted to go do something that he did not have certainty in and left these sword moves behind. He also does not want to let his most impressive creation in his life to fade into oblivion.

Xu Yourong gazed into his eyes and said, “Anyway, you must do your best to live.”

Chen Changsheng gazed back into her eyes, and thought that if it was fate, then the requirements fate had provided should have been extremely clear. Whether if it was for the Halving Blade Technique, or to remember these lovely memories, only when the pair had lived and met again would there be any meaning.

“May the sacred light be with you.” Xu Yourong sincerely wished him well.

Chen Changsheng leaned forward, and awkwardly hugged her.

He replied, “Be with us.”

The ground began to tremble once again. This time, it was not the opening of the obsidian coffin, nor did it originate from his dagger. Instead, it was because the monster tide had finally arrived. Chen Changsheng remembered what Xu Yourong had said not too long ago, she did not want to die in another person’s tomb, so he naturally supported her and walked towards the exterior of the mausoleum. When he passed the long passageway, he did not forget to collect all the luminous pearls embedded in the walls.

Xu Yourong felt intrigued as she watched this scene, and also felt even more admiration; to be so calm before life and death was not something that anyone could do. It was also very obvious that he really did not fear death. Such a mental state was close to those of sages.

Chen Changsheng actually did not think too much about matters of life or death, and instead, thought more about the sleeping black dragon in the lake water outside his Ethereal Palace. At this moment, he did not know, and was also worried over that if he died in the Garden of Zhou, what would happen to the Black Dragon? Would it follow him into a long slumber, or would it continue to live even though it was unable to wake? After all, at present, it was only a spiritual soul.

They left the mausoleum and arrived at the great platform at the end of the divine path. Previously, they were able to gaze at the grassland beneath them, Chen Changsheng looked at the wutong tree which owned the countless jade-green leaves that swayed in the incoming breeze. He said to Xu Yourong, “No matter how great

your magical artifact is, it is still unable to constantly protect us. Why don't you put it away?"

Xu Yourong said, "It can help us buy some time." Unlike those cultivators who viewed magical artifacts and the level of cultivation as more important than their lives, she had always believed that these were mere worldly possessions. If it could be used to earn some valuable time or opportunities, not to mention heavy damage, even directly being destroyed would be nothing to feel pity about.

Chen Changsheng replied, "Right now, what we need the least is time."

Before they memorized the Halving Blade Technique, time was imperative, but afterward, it had no significance to them at all. Although Xu Yourong had been plucked out of the abyss of death by his blood, she was still severely injured and weak, and the longer she took, the more dangerous it was. Most importantly, the flow of time in the Plains of Unsetting Sun was different from the real world. The closer to the Mausoleum of Zhou, the slower time flowed. Even if they could last for a few extra days by relying on the wutong tree, perhaps it was only a split second in the real world outside the Garden of Zhou, so what opportunities were there?

"Reasonable." Xu Yourong extended her hand and transformed the wutong back into a longbow and carried it on her shoulder.

The green leaves suddenly disappeared, and the surroundings of the stone platform became empty. Chen Changsheng and Xu

Yourong began to face the powerful opponents and unknown end head-on. Although what came directly at them head-on was not a rain of blood, it was still a foul wind.

The dusky world was full of countless monsters. In the grasslands and before the mausoleum, as far as the eye could see, it formed a dense mass; numerous and crowded.

# Chapter 319 - Exchanging Intentions By Brushing Away Snow

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In the dark twilight, the monster tide was like a black ocean. Standing in front of the black ocean were the five demon experts. Above them in the sky was an even more massive shadow. It seemed just like this black ocean's reflection.

Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong stood on the stone platform in front of the main gate of the mausoleum. Separated by the several thousand zhang long divine path, they viewed this magnificent yet terrifying spectacle. They gazed at the black piece of wood in Nanke's hand as it emitted countless rays of light and knew that their initial conjecture was correct. The Soul Pivot was in front of that obsidian coffin, but the Soul Wood was in the hands of the demons.

Xu Yourong said rather regretfully, "I've cultivated the Dao since I was a child, but it seems that what I believed to be the Dao was not the Dao. All those so-called calculations only allowed to me understand mortal affairs. It seems to me that you and I can only rely on heaven now."

Chen Changsheng gazed at the black ocean in front of them and the shadow in the sky above and said, "I believe that there is such a thing as fate, but I don't believe that it decides all things."

As he said these words, he was very calm and serious. It was only that last word, 'things', which caused his voice to softly tremble, indicating that he was a little nervous. He pulled himself together and then continued, "As expected, the Soul Wood was in the hands

of the demons. No wonder we were able to get to the Mausoleum of Zhou without meeting a single monster, but...those demons could have commanded those monsters to come kill us a long time ago, but why did they not do it and instead gave us a clear path?"

Xu Yourong said, "We already discussed this in that patch of autumn reeds. The most likely possibility was that they needed us to guide the way."

Viewing it in this way, in the eyes of the demons, the location of the Mausoleum of Zhou was far more important than the life and death of those two. Why were the demons looking for the Mausoleum of Zhou? Was there something inside they absolutely needed to obtain? No matter how they thought about it, they felt that it all had to do with the Halving Blade Technique engraved on the obsidian coffin. As they thought about this idea, Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong glanced into each other's eyes.

Now that the Halving Blade Technique was destroyed, only by combining the characters and pictures memorized in their two minds would that blade technique reappear.

Using this to threaten the demons and exchange it for a way out? He used his eyes to ask this question.

"It's no use." Xu Yourong gazed down the divine path at that little girl's cold eyes and shook her head.

The phoenix and the peacock were predestined rivals. The meeting of these two geniuses from different races would lead to

many stories in the future.

In that determined, even desperate, battle at the peak of Sunset Valley, no matter what terrifying strength Nanke had displayed, she had calmly responded. Just as she was about to cross the line of victory, the zither-playing old man entered the fray, causing her to suffer severe injuries. She plunged into the abyss, and then the moment she was at her most desperate straits, her blood went through its second awakening, causing a pair of pure white wings to emerge from her back and allow her to fly through the night sky.

If it had not been for the fact that she had to save Chen Changsheng, she was absolutely the victor of that battle. She only needed to leave the Garden of Zhou. Yet the current her, although her life had temporarily been saved, was still weak and exhausted, no longer able to engage in combat. Moreover, Nanke had clearly recovered her strength to its peak and was just as strong as she had been on the peak of Sunset Valley and appeared to be even more tyrannical.

Should she regret it? She should, she thought to herself as she calmly and silently gazed at Chen Changsheng.

Chen Changsheng did not know that she was looking at him because he was staring at that black ocean in front of the mausoleum.

That black ocean was made up of thousands upon thousands of monsters. Their powerful and bloody Qi soared to the heavens, as if they wanted to tear the sky apart.

The monster tide had gray dragon serpents, demon vultures, and even more monsters with such powerful Qi that not even his spiritual sense could perceive them, let alone that terrifying shadow which hung in the air behind them.

If all those monsters surrounding them began to attack, the black ocean could directly drown the mausoleum. Let alone him, even those Divine Generals who were at the peak of Star Condensation, perhaps even the Saints, could only stay far away. Besides Zhou Dufu coming back to life, who could possibly have the strength to resist this monster tide alone?

The monster tide was somewhat restless, especially those gray dragon serpents and demon vultures whose many companions had been killed by Xu Yourong. The monster tide incessantly sounded with shrill cries, and yet, perhaps because some of Zhou Dufu's Qi still remained about the mausoleum, or perhaps because that glowing piece of black wood was controlling them, they remained ten li from the mausoleum, not taking a single step closer.

The black ocean was a curtain, and a gorgeous stream of light was drawing upon it.

Seeing this picture, Chen Changsheng thought about that unforgettable encounter at the lake all those dozens of days ago. His pupils contracted and he subconsciously tightened the grip on the hilt of his dagger.

The stream of light needed only an instant to travel along that

seemingly endless divine path and arrived by the several hundred zhang high mausoleum at the space in front of Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong.

The beautiful and ethereal wings of light gently flapped in the gloomy light. In between those wings of light were two beautiful women who seemed to have become as one.

Their appearances were both extremely beautiful, but their facial features and temperaments were very different, one could even say complete opposites. One was dignified, the other charming. One had a fluid gaze, her bearing like ten thousand flowers. The other had calm and gentle eyes, so pure that it made people presume she was an aristocrat's daughter. When they stood shoulder to shoulder, it gave people an intense sensation that brutally assaulted their minds.

If Chen Changsheng was a little older, perhaps he would have a little more experience to understand this sort of allure, but he was only fifteen years old. Moreover, his entire mind was put into cultivating the Dao to seek a longer life, so he had never thought about those sorts of things. In his eyes, those two women were still those frightening demon women that had attempted to kill him in the lake.

Xu Yourong said, "They are Nanke's two wings, or her two maids. One is called Hua Cui, the other is called Ning Qiu."

This was the first time Chen Changsheng had heard their names. He was a little startled, and the gaze he turned towards them now held other emotions.

From his chats with Xu Yourong on their journey, he knew that Nanke's two wings had through some ceremony of the Candle Shadow Shamans obtained spiritual bodies. They possessed spiritual sense and self-awareness, but they would always have to obey the orders of their master. Life and death were not in their own hands. Their master only needed to think about it, and they would vanish into a puff of smoke and thus die.

When he heard those names, he did not like them. Hua Cui? Ning Qiu? These were very common names for slave girls. It gave one the impression of someone timid and humble, never able to live a happy life. Of course, he knew that these two names had not been chosen by those two maids. The person he disliked was the one who had conferred these names upon them and who even held their lives in her hands, the Demon Princess.

Nanke's two maids had attended to their master every day, so it was very easy for them to understand the meaning in his eyes.

Hua Cui was that charming beauty with the extremely soft waist and fluid glaze. Her watery eyes gazed at Chen Changsheng, and she said with soft and sticky voice, "Truly a child that loves others."

Ning Qiu was that aristocratic daughter with an elegant complexion and dignified bearing, but she loathed the empathy and more so the pity in his eyes. She thought to herself, that day you almost died at our hands, but now you pity us because our master holds our lives in her hands? How absurd! How disrespectful!

With a hint of anger, she rushed up to the stone platform.

"Hey! What are you rushing for? I still haven't spoken with him!"

Hua Cui was carried along with her as she flew up to the stone platform. She spoke rather frantically, seeming very confused. Yet her fingers were already infused with a dark green light, sinister to the extreme.

With a swish, the space in front of the high platform of the mausoleum was filled with countless green specks of light, dense like stars in the sky.

All of those green lights were the poison of the Peacock Plume. If they were to enter the flesh and blood, death was a certainty.

At the battle by the lakeshore, they had thought of every method possible, and yet still had been unable to pierce Chen Changsheng's skin. For them to still use this attack, then presumably they had definitely concealed some other method within.

Xu Yourong calmly gazed at this scene, her right hand gripping the longbow as her fingers tapped out a light tempo on the smooth and ancient bow. At any time, she was prepared to take action should Chen Changsheng's vigilance let up.

At the moment, she truly had no strength to battle, but she could still use the Tong Bow to block one attack from the enemy. Chen

Changsheng did not give her this chance. His right foot took a step forward, and his shoes splashed water on the ground. His strength went from his waist to his shoulders to his wrist, and the dagger in his hand transformed into a straight line and thrust out towards the edge of the stone platform.

With a snap, it seemed like the air around the edges of the stone platform had been directly shattered by his attack.

Even more ethereal was that pure white snowflakes began to form in the air around the straight line drawn by his dagger. These snowflakes were ten times as large as naturally formed snowflakes and were both beautiful and tangible.

The snowflakes gently fell down. Evidently, they enveloped those two wings of light.

The two maids within the wings of light would individually have the strength of the upper level of Ethereal Opening, which was on par with his alone. When they combined, their power would abruptly increase severalfold, thus on that day when they battled on the lakeshore, Chen Changsheng had no chance. Today, because they were in front of their master, they had secretly concealed another method. Yet, they had not imagined that they would not be able to fully use any of their follow-up attacks before Chen Changsheng's single attack had broken their momentum.

This move performed by Chen Changsheng had not been seen on the continent for at least ten or so years. It had only appeared once in the Grand Examination two months ago, so no one could recognize it.

He used the Orthodox Academy's Toppling Mountain Staff.

In terms of sword speed, the Orthodox Academy's Toppling Mountain Staff was no match for the Heavenly Dao Academy's Sword of Hithering Light. In terms of sword energy, the Orthodox Academy's Toppling Mountain Staff was not up to the Three Forms of Wenshui, nor was it better than the great sword techniques from the Mount Li Sword Sect. However, the Toppling Mountain Staff was the staff technique used in the Orthodox Academy of the past to teach and discipline students, so what was most important for it was the word 'reason'.

This move seemed to not be reasonable, but it was actually very reasonable. The reason lay in the Black Frost cold Qi attached to the dagger, and it lay in the ten thousand snowflakes slowly falling down in the air above the stone platform.

Nanke's two maids were too fast, so fast that it was even meaningless for him to use the Yeshi Step. In addition, the stone platform was too small, making it difficult to put the Yeshi Step to its full use. He was even less able to battle in the air with those two maids, so he had to limit their speed and contain this battle into a relatively narrower space.

At the same time, the Toppling Mountain Staff of the Orthodox Academy also rested upon the word 'strict'.

'Strict' meant that there was no flexibility, you... cannot avoid!

Those two words were the heart of Chen Changsheng's sword.

Adding on the Black Frost cold Qi, this move could be said to be extremely chilling.

The snowflakes fell, touching those dark green lights. In a flash, the color of those green lights suddenly grew much dimmer.

The chilling sword move took advantage of the opportunity and pierced at the two women between the wings of light.

The mausoleum's stone platform suddenly sounded out with a strange yell, full of anger and unwillingness.

The wings of light swiftly moved, scattering the snowflakes. In an instant, they had retreated dozens of zhang.

Hua Cui and Ning Qiu's faces were pale.

A stream of blood slowly seeped from their two bodies.

Staring at Chen Changsheng at the edge of the stone platform with his dagger bared, their eyes were filled with shock and disbelief.

# Chapter 319 - Exchanging Intentions By Brushing Away Snow

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That day by the lake, when Nanke's two maids came together, Chen Changsheng lost all chances at winning and could not stand up to them at all. Just when he was about to be shaken to death, he completely relied on those silver boxes and roast lambs to find a chance to live, and then borrowed the Yellow Paper Umbrella to escape. Now, if calculated using the time in the Plains of the Unsetting Sun, the bloody and dangerous battle only occurred several dozen days ago, yet he was actually now able to able to force back the combined attack of the two maids that had been stored up for a long time, and even injure them. How could a cultivator improve so greatly in such a short amount of time? What exactly happened to him?

It could be clearly seen from this one strike that Chen Changsheng's level of cultivation had not undergone any change, and still remained at the upper level of Ethereal Opening. At the same time, the amount of true essence he had was still much lesser than cultivators at a similar level. This sword strike was admittedly exquisite, but the greatest difference was still that his true essence had turned abnormally cold for some reason, and just using the sword energy, he formed a huge snowflake.

Even so... it was not the greatest change. The most important part was the change of his sword intent. His sword intent became incomparably refined, and had already turned into substance.

It must be known that he followed his heart, so he did not practice the sword. How could his heart of the sword become so

perfectly fluent and bright in a short, several dozen days?

The shock was only momentary, and in the battle, they could not think about it deeply. With the loud sound from the high speed fluttering of the wings of light, the two maids transformed into a streak of light, once again rushing the stone platform.

On the side of the stone platform, a bright sword ray illuminated the surrounds. The sword ray appeared so suddenly, causing the area to become white hot, as if it was a bolt of lightning.

There was a screech as the edge of the dagger pierced through the air.

The streak of light stopped in a flash, and then flew backwards at great speeds. It transformed into countless glimmers of light several dozen zhang in the air before dispersing.

It was still the Toppling Mountain Staff from the Orthodox Academy. The sword energy was still desolate, the sword intent was still refined, and the heart of the sword was still so perfectly fluent and bright, unbelievably clear.

Chen Changsheng held the dagger in front of him, and he did not reveal any expressions of joy. He did not become complacent because the wings of light suddenly disappeared—instead, he became even more alert.

This was because he knew very clearly that although his sword

intent had improved greatly, and the initial strike could unexpectedly injure the two maids, the second strike should not have been able to have such a perfect effect. The sword ray that was like electricity only injured the left shoulder of the lady called Ning Qiu, and did not heavily injure her. Naturally, it was impossible to cause the opponent's wings of light to disperse.

The reason why the wings of light had dispersed into countless glimmers of light was because someone had confirmed that the two maids were not his opponent, and did not want them to continue wasting their time.

His gaze followed the floating glimmers of light and landed at the end of the divine path that was several thousand zhang long, on the ground in front of the mausoleum. He saw a small girl in her teens.

The glimmers of light floated and landed on her body, and were all absorbed. There were no changes in her expression, but she never had any expression since the beginning.

Nanke looked to the end of the divine path several thousand zhang away, at the young human male and female on the stone platform. She did not say anything.

According to her calculations and estimations, Xu Yourong would flee for the entire way, and after killing those monsters from before, her blood of the true phoenix should have been consumed. Right now, only the poisonous blood should remain in her body. Logically, even if she made it to this mausoleum, she should have been dead already at this moment, so why was she still

alive? However, this did not matter. It was very obvious that she was incredibly weak, and had no strength to continue to battle. Although Nanke could not claim she had won in this predestined confrontation, the god of death would act as the fairest judge. Xu Yourong was about to die, and Nanke was going to live. This was enough, but the problem was the teenager called Chen Changsheng.

Her master Black Robe did not tell her the entire plans of the Garden of Zhou, so she naturally did not know. Because of this Yellow Paper Umbrella and some other reasons, Black Robe could not tell her his final decision. She always believed that Chen Changsheng, Qi Jian and Zhexiu were the same, all targets that had to die. However, from her current perspective, he did not seem to be as easy to kill as she had imagined.

She was not unfamiliar with the name Chen Changsheng—not because he placed first upon the First Banner in the Grand Examination, not because he comprehended all of the monoliths of the front mausoleum in a night, and also not because he was the youngest principal of the Orthodoxy Academy in all of history, but rather because he was Xu Yourong's fiancé. She had not thought that this human teenager would actually be able to heal his own injuries while fleeing through the grassland. She could not have predicted that even though his cultivation level had not risen, his sword intent and fighting strength had a clear qualitative leap when compared to his performance in the battle several dozen days ago that was once narrated in detail to her by her two maids.

What happened in the grassland? Alternatively, did these changes occur only after they had entered the mausoleum?

When she thought this, her mood became even worse. Of course, no matter how magical the encounter that Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong had, all she needed to do right now was to command the monster tide to attack via the Soul Wood to kill them very easily. However, she did not do so, because the monster tide still maintained some sort of natural reverence towards this mausoleum. If she wanted to forcefully command them to attack, it would require too much effort. More importantly, she did not want this mighty and sacred mausoleum to be made into a mess by the extremely filthy, stinky and dumb monsters. If it was possible, she would not allow any other organism to approach the mausoleum, much less step inside it. Since she could not change what had happened already, she could begrudgingly accept Xu Yourong and... the current Chen Changsheng standing on the high platform in front of the mausoleum. This was because although she viewed them as enemies, they had enough bloodline talent, and could not be regarded as dirtying this mausoleum.

Indeed, in her eyes, this was a mighty and sacred mausoleum.

This was because the mausoleum buried the human, the person that she worshipped the most in her entire life. It even exceeded her master, much less her father.

She had never expressed these thoughts, and even sometimes purposely expressed an opposite opinion in Xuelao City. Because even if the demons believed in respecting the strong, even though there were many demons that admired or were even crazy about that human, she was a noble Demon Princess; how could she worship a human?

However, she had never tricked her inner feelings.

She worshipped the human man buried in the mausoleum to no limit.

In Xuelao City, in the land of the demons, her father was strong like the night sky, but only that man had once torn a piece off the night sky.

Looking into the past and future, looking at the continent and oceans, as long as it was beneath the starry sky, this man was always the strongest entity. To her, such an expert deserved the admiration of all life. Besides, her master and that man had countless secret connections. These connections had long been the greatest honor in the depths of her heart.

Today, she finally arrived before the mausoleum.

Compared to this matter, anything like the dignity of the Demon Princess, or her father's cold attitude, was unimportant.

With such a mood, Nanke began to approach the mausoleum along the divine path.

The divine path was several thousands of zhang long. With her level of cultivation, she could cross it in only a moment, but in order to express her respect for the person in the mausoleum, she did not do so. Her steps were very soft, and her manner was extremely careful. She walked very slowly and her expression was

very solemn, as if she was worshipping.

Between the steps, hundreds of moss-green tail feathers slowly grew out of her body, and then suddenly opened in the incoming wind. It was indescribably beautiful and pretty. The sun at the edge of the grassland had already become a blurry ball of light. The colour of the sky did not stop at being dark and gloomy, and grew even more so. She who walked on the divine path was lit up by the final rays of setting light, actually becoming brighter and brighter, as if she was on fire.

Seeing this image, Xu Yourong's eyes also brightened, before growing slightly gloomy. This was because no matter how much she wanted to fight Nanke who was under such a state, she had no more power to battle. Chen Changsheng's eyes did not become any brighter, because his eyes were always so bright—just like how Nanke's expression did not change, because she never wore any expression.

In Tang Thirty-Six's words, his eyes were like two mirrors, very bright and dazzling, and often causing people to feel nervous.

He was the same as Xu Yourong, and could clearly feel that Nanke, who walked along the divine path so carefully as if she was worshipping, had already raised her state to an almost perfect level, displaying an unimaginable strength. However, unlike Xu Yourong, no feelings for battle appeared in him. He did not want to battle Nanke in this state at all.

This was his greatest difference with Xu Yourong and Nanke, these peerless geniuses. He never battled for battle, and did not

win in order to be victorious. When he did things, it was often for one reason: to live. He believed that this was the most sacred reason, or importance. As a result, he did not need to adjust, he did not need to enter tranquil contemplation, and he did not need to worship, much less need to be bathed in incense and fast for three days. When he had to battle, he needed to be already prepared.

It was just that today, his state was not too perfect.

It was extremely possible that this was the final battle in his life. He did not have any confidence, but that was not the problem, as he had already won too many battles that had no reason for him to be victorious. The problem was that, when he should have been focusing on welcoming this battle, he was instead slightly distracted, and always felt that some things were not done.

At this moment, Nanke had already reached the final part of the divine path, only a hundred zhang away from him.

He finally could not endure it any longer, and turned around to Xu Yourong.

“What’s wrong?” Xu Yourong asked.

Chen Changsheng looked at her face. He wanted to extend his hand and touch it, but he did not dare.

Xu Yourong raised her heavily injured and powerless hand, and gently patted his shoulder, as if she wanted to dust off the snow on

his clothes.

Those bits of snow were already long-melted.

Chen Changsheng was satisfied. He looked into her eyes, and said extremely seriously, “If we are able to leave the Garden of Zhou alive, I will definitely come and find you.”

Xu Yourong looked into his eyes, forcefully resisted the shyness and purposely said calmly, “No need, I will find you.”

“Sure.” Chen Changsheng had never replied so quickly.

If Nanke had given up her attitude that seemed like worshipping at that moment, and launched her attacks, perhaps he and she would already be dead.

Fortunately, Nanke did not do so.

After finishing off this thing, he finally had no more matters that could distract him.

He looked at the small girl on the divine path that walked over slowly. He was calm and focused.

Just as countless people had once said, cultivation was never a fair matter. Although he had studied the Daoist Canon since he was a child, although his physique was also different from a

normal person's, and although he had reached the upper realm of Ethereal Opening at just fifteen, the difference of bloodline talent could not be made up for so easily. Besides, there was still the monster tide that had transformed the surroundings of the mausoleum into a black ocean.

This was a battle that only held death.

However, he was still so calm, displaying steadiness and calmness beyond his age. If looked upon from behind, at this moment, he would have the demeanor of a great sword cultivator.

Before, when he was able to force back a strong opponent with one strike, that was because his heart of the sword was already different from before. In the long abscond that occurred in the grasslands for several dozen days, he and Xu Yourong had conversations on many matters. What they conversed most about was cultivation. From the raining temple to the snowing temple, from the reeds in autumn to the island of grass in summer, they always talked about this. He had talent in cultivation, but no experience in battle. Xu Yourong taught him many things. Much more importantly, her attitude towards cultivation and life, this type of tranquility, serenity and calmness affected him a lot.

This was the heart of the Dao.

The heart of the sword was actually a type of Dao heart.

In terms of the brightness of the heart of the Dao, just who was greater than Xu Yourong in the younger generation of the entire

world of cultivation?

From the clashing of swords, the edge became sharper. The same could be said for the heart of the sword.

Right now, his heart of the sword was already brightly lit, so his sword intent was naturally strong and pure.

Xu Yourong did not know that he was only fifteen this year. However, looking at him from behind, her slightly gloomy eyes once again brightened up, as if new rain had finally arrived to the dried-up mountain.

She left his side, and returned to the main entrance of the mausoleum. She looked for a corner where she could avoid the storm, and sat down cross-legged, wrapping herself up in the insulating sackcloth.

Just how had his attitude towards life already influenced her so much?

As a result, she closed her eyes, and began resting.

# Chapter 320 - Hitting The Wrist

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Nanke arrived in an area several dozen zhang away from the stone platform along the divine path. She looked towards the main entrance of the mausoleum, and her emotions changed slightly. Xu Yourong had her eyes closed and displayed a serene expression on her pale face, as if what was about to happen had nothing to do with her. This kind of attitude displayed her absolute confidence in someone. That someone was naturally Chen Changsheng, who stood at the edge of the stone platform.

Nanke looked at Chen Changsheng and was slightly confused. Even if he was Xu Yourong's fiancé, why did it make her so confident? Chen Changsheng also looked at her. At the dawn of that day, on the side of the lake that was full of reeds, he and Nanke met face-to-face, before continuing their chase-down into the plains. Only after several dozens of days did he meet this terrifying demon girl once again.

Describing her as a teenager was incorrect. She did not seem to be a day past her early teens based on her youthful appearance. Her eyes were slightly far apart, and as for her forehead, it also seemed to be slightly wide. The indifference, or in other words lifelessness, in her eyes gave one a numbing feeling. It was exactly because the spirit of the peacock in the space between her eyebrows was overly powerful that allowed him to confirm that he did not originally make a mistake. This young girl was indeed ill. He thought about it but said nothing. After fleeing for so long in the grassland, he had long made it clear to himself that 'cross-eyed' was not a term that sounded nice. Also, at this moment, he was very nervous. The hand that grasped the sword hilt did not sweat, but his knuckles were rather white.

—Now that he already knew that Nanke was a Demon Princess and that she was said to be the one with the greatest bloodline talents out of all the daughters of the Demon Lord, what was even more terrifying was that she was the only disciple of the mysterious yet powerful military advisor of the demons. Before, when he was beside the lake, he could not even defeat Nanke's two maids. Even if his sword technique had now seen great improvement, how could he be her opponent?

A true battle never had a plain start. This battle that was about to occur on the stone platform of the mausoleum would determine to whom the possession of the Mausoleum of Zhou went, as well as determine the final success or failure of the great plot of the demons. Naturally, it would not have any long-winded scripts or probing attacks. Without any delays, and also without any sign, the battle began with the wind that originated from the surroundings of the mausoleum.

The pair of moss-green wings spread open behind Nanke in the incoming wind. With a soft hum, the sound represented the extremely fast changes that occurred in the air and the air being shaken up. Her petite body immediately disappeared from where she was and reappeared before Chen Changsheng in the next moment. She extended her thin index finger and pierced it towards his forehead with a strand of terrifying Qi on the tip.

She arrived too quickly, and her actions were even quicker. As for Chen Changsheng, who had already long stored up energy and had already long raised the sword energy to the extreme... he was actually unable to strike in time. Her speed with her two wings was just too fast, so unimaginably fast that she roughly had a spot

among the highest ranked in the entire continent. Other than people like Jin Yulu, who could follow up?

At this moment, any of Chen Changsheng's reactions, such as drawing the sword, blocking with the sword, piercing, cutting, chopping or lifting, were already too late.

He was unable to follow Nanke's speed and rhythm. If he attempted to do something, he would definitely be pierced in the forehead by the tip of her finger before he could.

Her finger was very tender and seemed very ordinary. However, the Qi that the finger carried with it was very terrifying. Anyone could imagine what the effects would be if they were struck by that finger.

As a result, he could only do nothing. He quickly retreated backwards, and then retreated into nothingness.

A soft hum came from Nanke's fingertip. The terrifying power was concentrated, but it was not sent out. It did not come in contact with Chen Changsheng's forehead and instead made the space at the edge of the stone platform almost seem to be ripped open.

Chen Changsheng suddenly disappeared before her very eyes. This caused her wooden expression to finally undergo some change.

This was a matter that was very hard to understand, but actually, it did not make her think too much, much less cause her to become alert. This was because she understood why but did not care at all.

Just when Chen Changsheng appeared in a certain area on the stone platform, she appeared almost at the same time and continued to pierce her finger towards his forehead. This instead caused Chen Changsheng to be surprised as to how the opponent was actually able to follow his footwork. It had to be known that this did not have any great connection with speed. He had used the most unfathomable Yeshi Step that was the fastest in close-range dodging.

He once again disappeared, and Nanke also disappeared with him. In the next moment, he appeared before the main entrance of the mausoleum and was closely followed by Nanke, who also appeared there. On the high platform in front of the mausoleum, there were no great gusts and only soft breezes. As the two disappeared and reappeared, they did not produce any sounds, which seemed extremely strange.

Chen Changsheng was not able to break away from her at all, and he was unable to break away from that thin finger that grew closer and closer to his forehead. He was unable to break away from the terrifying Qi and the feeling of impending death.

Wherever he trod, he left behind a mark of snow, attempting to avoid that finger. Only when he appeared again did he realise that he was already forced to the edge of the tall platform.

During the Grand Examination, when he was by the lake, the

Yeshi Step that he once used countless times to turn the tide clearly held no significance to Nanke.

However, at least it helped him earn some time.

During the extremely silent, weird and forceful advance that occurred in this very short amount of time, he was still able to gain some distance in the end, providing him with an opportunity to strike.

Past the thin finger, his gaze landed on her forehead, and his expression was extremely concentrated.

With a swish, an extremely bright sword ray appeared at the edge of the tall platform, as if it had even illuminated the dusky sky.

It was still the Toppling Mountain Staff of the Orthodox Academy.

This was a staff technique—or should it be called a sword technique?—that he liked the most and was most familiar with. As a result, it was also his fastest.

However... it was still not as fast as Nanke. In other words, Nanke was too strong, so strong that she could very casually break through his strike.

To strike with the sword needed at least the movement of the wrist.

To bend the finger only needed the movement of fingers.

Nanke's finger that pierced towards his forehead bent slightly, and the fingertip struck the body of his dagger with extreme precision.

With a clear clang, it was like a newly-cast bell that had been struck by a black rock brought by a sparrow.

Chen Changsheng's dagger was knocked away. A power that could be regarded as boundless and a load that he could not personally bear travelled from the body of the dagger into his shoulder.

If it was a normal sword, Nanke would have shattered it with her finger attack.

If it was a normal human at the upper level of the Ethereal Opening Realm, Nanke would have crippled their shoulder with the finger.

Fortunately, this dagger was not a normal sword, and Chen Changsheng's body that had been bathed in dragon blood was even more perfect than a perfect Purification.

When Nanke's fingertip continued to travel towards his forehead, the dagger in his hand flew back like a reed.

It was still the Toppling Mountain Staff of the Orthodox Academy. However, this time, it was not piercing but rather smashing.

The dagger in his hand... smashed towards Nanke's wrist.

He did not attack Nanke's forehead, because he had already confirmed that power was what determined speed, and his speed could not exceed Nanke's.

He could only choose a method of attack that had the shortest range.

The action was very acute. It only needed the twist of a wrist and seemed very casual.

At this moment, the dagger was no longer a sword but instead a staff of discipline, or truthfully speaking, a whip of discipline.

What he used was furthermore not a sword technique, but rather the true Toppling Mountain Staff Technique.

He wanted to hit Nanke's wrist, like a teacher disciplining a naughty student.

Smack.

He hit it.

# Chapter 321 - There Is A Rainbow Rising Over The Plains

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With a smack, the dagger in Chen Changsheng's hand accurately struck Nanke's wrist. If Nanke's previous finger had not been so wondrous, and caused the edge of the dagger to float like a catkin, even if in the short amount of time in which the dagger struck her wrist he could only go with the flow, he would still have been able to use the rotation of the wrist to slice off her wrist with the dagger.

Even if he could not do this, his seemingly thin dagger fell with an extremely powerful force, such that even a mature Demon General would not be able to turn a blind eye to. Yet Nanke's expression did not change. Although the razor-sharp finger which seemed like a peacock's plume had diverged from its original direction, it still continued forward unyieldingly, targeted precisely at his abdomen.

A thunderclap resounded above the high platform in front of the mausoleum. Chen Changsheng's body turned into a stream of light as he flew backwards. With a muffled boom, he fell heavily against the stone doors of the mausoleum. Dust sprayed out from the cracks in the door and the ground, filling the air of the stone platform and causing the entire scene to become unclear.

Amidst the sound of his clothes scraping against the stone, Chen Changsheng slid down from the door onto the floor. His knees were a little bent and his face was pale. The blood which had rushed up his throat was forcefully swallowed back down. His sea of consciousness had suffered an intense shock, and he found it

impossible to rid himself of the ensuing pain. Even more frightening was the spirit mountain upon which his Ethereal Palace rested was shedding countless small chunks of stone. Nanke's seemingly casual attacks had almost injured him so severely to the point where it would be difficult for him to stand.

His slightly bent knees slowly turned straight. His rushing blood and true essence gradually calmed down. He stood up and stared into Nanke's eyes, awaiting the next attack.

Nanke did not immediately make her second attack, but instead, gazed at his left hand.

Chen Changsheng's right hand held the dagger while his left hand held that Yellow Paper Umbrella. Ever since he had walked out of the mausoleum, the umbrella had been in his hand.

Previously, Nanke's finger had not been able to pierce his abdomen, and instead, struck the surface of that umbrella.

Her eyebrows were very thin and somewhat faint, like those of a little girl's. At this moment when she gazed at this umbrella, her eyebrows leapt up in what seemed like surprise. She had heard Hua Cui and Ning Qiu's report on their battle with Chen Changsheng, so she knew that this human youth possessed an old umbrella. That umbrella seemed somewhat strange. Yet, only when her finger imbued with such terrifying power and killing intent was completely blocked by that umbrella, did she understand just how strange it was. However, the thing that had really caused her to be surprised was the fact that Chen Changsheng had not actually been knocked out, and that Chen Changsheng had actually managed to

stand back up.

Even if he had the old umbrella which had defensive capabilities that surpassed her imagination to separate the two of them, the vast majority of her attack's power had still inevitably fallen upon Chen Changsheng's body. He was not Xu Yourong, nor was he that demi-human princess named Luoluo. He lacked innate talent, so even if he had undergone a perfect Purification, he logically still should not have been able to endure that attack. Just what did he possess which let him stand back up?

However, Nanke did not think too much about it. The occasional mishap was incapable of changing the general situation.

This vast mausoleum was hers to inherit, so Xu Yourong and Chen Changsheng, this pair of adulterers, also had to die by her hand.

"Your Yeshi Step is wrong," she told Chen Changsheng.

Behind her, in the plains, was the monster like an ocean and the shadow in the sky like the night.

As she said these words, she slightly raised her chin and carried an indifferent expression on her face. She was clearly much shorter than Chen Changsheng, yet she seemed to look down on him. She was clearly younger than Chen Changsheng, but her tone was like that of a teacher instructing her pupil. She was clearly just a petite and seemingly delicate little girl, but she seemed like the esteemed scholar of the generation.

Chen Changsheng understood that her words were correct. His Yeshi Step had been inspired by the assassin from the Yeshi tribe who had attempted kill Luolio as well as from his discoveries in the Daoist Canons. His Yeshi Step was only a simplified version. To be even more accurate, this version of the Yeshi Step was an imitation developed countless years ago by some predecessor in the Orthodoxy after many attempts.

Nanke was not a member of the Yeshi tribe, but she was a member of the tribe amongst the demons which possessed the most pure and noble bloodline, the imperial clan. Her bloodline allowed her to grasp the Yeshi Step, and this was the complete Yeshi Step.

When he had used the Yeshi Step against her just now, it must be said that it was a most idiotic course of action.

The reason Nanke said these words was because the Toppling Mountain Staff of the Orthodox Academy used by Chen Changsheng obviously had an reprimanding air about it. This made her very displeased. She wanted to set straight just who had the qualifications to reprimand who in this place.

With these words, her objective had been accomplished. She naturally would not waste anymore time on idle chatter.

Her figure disappeared from the edge of the stone platform and in an instant, she appeared in front of Chen Changsheng with her finger thrusting forward, once again aimed at his forehead.

Several dozen days ago, at the wetland at the edge of the plains, Chen Changsheng had seen her and told her that she was sick, that she was cross-eyed, and that the pinecone between her eyebrows was afflicted by the powerful divine soul within her. Today, she wanted to gouge out a bloody hole between his eyebrows to see if there were any problems within. At the same time, she also wanted to see between three eyes and cross-eyed, which one was uglier.

She was a Demon Princess possessing a shocking bloodline talent, but she was still just a ten year old girl after all. It was natural for her to inevitably throw a tantrum, however, her attacks were absolutely not child's play. They were extremely terrifying.

In that previous round which resulted in a crushing defeat, Chen Changsheng had sensed that there was no way he could be faster than her, whether it was in terms of movement techniques or sword drawing, so there was no way he could rush at her with attacks. The only thing he could do is defend.

A gust of cold wind abruptly sprung up in front of the mausoleum as if it suddenly became midwinter. Countless sword glows appeared around his body and then disappeared. They were like snowflakes illuminated by the first rays of the sun as it rose over a village.

The Black Frost chill accompanied the sword energy, forming several hundred icy mirrors in front of the mausoleum. The shape and texture of those mirrors were incomparably harmonious and each one of those mirrors were formed of his sword intent.

With a crack, the icy mirrors transformed into countless pieces of ice and flew out in all directions. In the dusky sky, they transformed into a sphere of snow, which then shattered.

At practically the same moment, the dozens of icy mirrors in front of his eyes also shattered.

Strange snow begun to fall before the main door of the mausoleum. The snow was very hard, even containing shards of ice, and the cold wind grew even more blustery.

Amidst the snowstorm appeared an extremely clear cavity. Anyone could tell that this had been formed by a petite figure.

The cold wind brushed against Chen Changsheng's face, causing his thin eyelashes to tremble incessantly.

Nanke's figure appeared. It was still that slender finger thrusting towards his forehead.

With a clamor, Chen Changsheng opened the Yellow Paper Umbrella in his left hand while the dagger in his right hand swung down using the Orthodox Academy's True Sword!

Nanke's fingertip landed on the umbrella. It was like a tree branch jabbing into a wet and heavy blanket, creating a 'whoomph' sound.

She then floated backwards, avoiding the extremely pure sword

energy. She stood back at the edge of the stone platform, her two wings slowly fluttering in the falling snow.

Her finger was not a tree branch, but a mountain.

Chen Changsheng's body was blasted backwards, smashing heavily against the stone doors of the mausoleum once again.

He had been standing very close to the door, so the impact was much heavier. Even the rainwater and snow amassed on the floor were jolted upwards by the impact of his collision.

Dust once again filled the air as he once again slid down from the mausoleum's stone doors. This time, he took even longer to painfully stand back up. At this point, the dust had already settled.

Seeing Nanke standing at the edge of the stone platform, his eyes were unwavering, and yet, there was a sense of helplessness within them.

This Demon Princess was truly too powerful, powerful to an extremely terrifying level.

Whether it was in terms of amount and vigor of true essence, level of cultivation, sense of battle, or even the most fundamental and most important, strength and speed; he was definitely no match for her.

Today, his sword heart was brightly lit. His sword intent was

clear and calm, without dust. It could be described as perfect, just like those mirrors of ice he had formed with his sword.

Yet, this said to be perfect sword intent formed into perfect mirrors of ice, when confronting this demon princess unexpectedly... could not even take a single blow.

She was a great mountain.

No matter how beautifully arranged and excellently constructed the garden was, how harmonious and seamless the mind was, how powerful the body was, or how chilling the sword intent was, it would all be crushed into a fine powder by this massive mountain.

How could he defeat her?

Unless he possessed the same bloodline talent as hers or the same amount of true essence.

However, he did not have that.

The severed meridians in his body had determined that it would be very difficult for him to live beyond twenty. It has also determined that his path of cultivation, in certain aspects, would be much more difficult than it was for normal cultivators. Even if he attracted more starlight, stored up even more lake water outside his Ethereal Palace, accumulated an even thicker layer of snow over his wasteland, then without a thought for his life frantically ignited it all, he would still be impossible for him to put

out enough true essence.

There was only one method: to make his sword grow even stronger.

The three thousand scripture of the Dao, ten thousand sword styles. In that place, he had read them and then cultivated. Even though he had memorized them from back to front, they were still the three thousand scriptures of the Dao, ten thousand sword styles.

To have his sword grow stronger in such a short time had nothing to do with sword styles and moves. He could only make his sword intent grow stronger.

In other words, he had to find an even stronger sword intent.

Where could he find such a strong sword intent?

After everything that had happened, was it finally coming to an end?

No. Chen Changsheng did not think this way, it was only because of a strand of sword intent that he had managed to cross these endless plains and arrive at this mausoleum.

Over the past few days, he had always been thinking about what that strand of sword intent which had summoned him to this place meant. Did that sword intent need him to do something? Right

now, it did not seem like that speculation was necessarily wrong, but at the very least in this moment, it wasn't the sword intent that needed him, but instead, he that needed the sword intent.

The strand of sword intent was somewhere around this grandiose mausoleum, but for some reason, it had concealed itself.

The sword intent was definitely waiting for him.

The dusky Plains of the Unsetting Sun were gloomy. The distant sky had been obscured by that dreadful shadow. The black ocean of the monster tide incessantly sent their cold and bloody odor skywards. Perhaps for this reason, rain clouds gradually formed in the sky above the mausoleum and the air grew cold and wet.

Without any warning, cold rain began to fall. It fell upon the massive stones of the mausoleum, smearing the world in a darker color.

Wrapped in a sackcloth and leaning against a corner of the mausoleum's main door, Xu Yourong had unexpectedly been soaked by this cold rain.

Holding the Yellow Paper Umbrella, Chen Changsheng stood in the chilly rain and gazed at Nanke who was standing at the edge of the platform, seemingly pondering.

Suddenly, his eyes lit up.

It was not because of the light emitted by Nanke, nor was it because he had thought of something. It was because his gaze had moved past Nanke and rested on the rainbow in the distant plains.

In truth, that rainbow should be called a light rainbow, because it did not have seven colors. It was only a dazzling white.

The light in his eyes was a reflection of the rainbow of light.

The Yellow Paper Umbrella in his hands began to shudder.

The rainbow of light rose up several dozen li away northwest.

It was not raining in that area. Everywhere amidst the reeds and weeds were pools of water, making it seem just like a sea.

In that area, there was a stalk of grass which was abruptly cut into pieces.

The mirror-like surface of the water also suddenly shattered.

The grass was broken into bits and the water was broken into patterns.

The patterns were extremely similar to the decorative designs often found on swords.

# Chapter 322 - The Appearance Of A Sword Intent

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The surface of the water began to ripple faster and faster, more and more frequently. The ripples that spread in all directions were slowly pushed together, knocking and tearing at each other. In the end, they transformed into countless drops of water and were knocked from the surface of the water, combining with the bits of grass that were ground into dust. It formed a faint green mist which was slightly transparent. In the light from far away, an extremely faint shadow could be vaguely seen.

The shadow was very thin and straight, like a straight stroke that had not been finished. It was as if an infinite amount of lake water had been poured into the ink that drew the line, giving one a feeling that although the thin shadow was in the mist, it seemed to be elsewhere. Although it was clearly before their eyes, it was as if it did not exist. Even if it seemed to exist in another world, it was only the shadow of a real object in the Garden of Zhou.

The green mist was the boundary between the real world and other worlds. Logically, this barrier that separated space should have been extremely stable. However, in the next moment after it had appeared, the green mist dispersed. The speed at which it dispersed was so fast that even the surrounding space could not react in time. As a result, a terrifying hurricane formed in the grassland.

—In an extremely short amount of time, the thing expanded rapidly. Actually, it was an explosion. To describe the scene at that moment in simpler words, it should be said that the green mist

exploded. However, this explosion did not create any sounds, other than the whistling of the wind; the silence was abnormally terrifying.

Being silent did not mean it was soft and powerless. Countless terrifying Qis and an unimaginable, shapeless cutting edge dispersed with the green mist, expanding into the surroundings of the grasslands. They easily caught up with and surpassed the hurricane caused by the distortion of space, and came in contact with the living and non-living things in the grassland first.

No matter if it was the wild reeds or special golden bells in the southern swamps, countless bushes were cut into shreds, transforming into a wave of fluttering green rain. It fell everywhere with swishing sounds. Even the rocks within the bushes were cut, turning into pebbles the size of fingernails. They were blown into the water of the wetlands like arrows, knocking the frogs and fish hidden in the mud unconscious. Closely following, those frogs and fish were also torn into pieces. No matter if it was scales or fish fins, they were all ground into dust. The ground of the wetlands were also broken into pieces, as if it had been plowed seventy-two times by a hard-working but dumb farmer. In the end, the water broke, transforming into countless droplets of water. The air also broke, transforming into countless soft breezes.

The green mist dispersed, and the thin shadow finally revealed its true appearance.

In a range of over ten li in the grassland, everything was chopped into pieces. It was a piece of flat wilderness, with everything

ground into fine dust.

The true appearance of the shadow was still a shadow. It seemed extremely blurry, and could not be clearly seen, but it could be roughly seen. It was a... sword.

This thin shadow was not the sword itself, but the shadow of a sword. In other words, it was a strand of sword intent.

When the sword intent appeared and chopped everything, the entire Plains of the Unsetting Sun, or even the entire Garden of Zhou could feel it. An extremely profound tremble spread out from the depths under the Mausoleum of Zhou. In the black ocean formed by the monster tide, it caused countless wild swells. This was the reaction of the countless monsters to the sword intent. The terrifying shadow in the sky grew even lower, as if it was going to envelop the entire grassland. Before the main entrance of the Mausoleum of Zhou, Nanke suddenly turned around and gazed into the depths of the grassland. She squinted her eyes, and her normal indifferent or even lifeless expression became extremely sharp. Afterwards, no matter if it was the innumerable monsters or her, or even the shadow in the sky, all could see the flat wilderness that had a circumference of ten li. However, they could not see the sword.

It was because before this, a breeze arose from the area of grassland.

The sword intent travelled with the wind and disappeared with the wind. It was quiet without a sound, and could disappear without a trace, so naturally, it could not be seen.

No one had felt the strand of sword intent traverse the dusky grasslands with the soft and long breeze. It entered the dark clouds, ignored the rain that fell from the sky and arrived before Zhou Dufu's mausoleum. Afterwards, like a stamen of winter sweets, it fell onto the ground that was covered in a thick layer of snow, and—just like the first flow of water from upstream that flowed into a riverbed that had been dry for thousands of years—it disappeared into the mausoleum.

Naturally, no one had discovered where the sword intent went.

Chen Changsheng raised the umbrella with his left hand at an angle. He did not block the rain, and was only preparing to block Nanke's attack. His whole body had already become wet from the rain.

The rain slowly turned into a shower, and the pearl-sized water droplets constantly hit the surface of the umbrella, creating sounds like a drum beating.

The Yellow Paper Umbrella began to tremble slightly. The tremble spread into the handle of the umbrella from the surface and ribs, and then clearly spread into his hand, into his body and into his heart.

The sound of rain slowly grew louder, but the tall platform before the mausoleum seemed extremely silent.

Nanke turned around, and looked at him with no expression. For

some reason, she felt that the teenager that was wet all over and in a sorry shape was slightly different from before. She did not know where this feeling came from, or that it was somewhat related to the abnormalities that occurred in the grassland before. However, she knew that something was about to happen. She did not accept any changes that would have stopped her from entering this great mausoleum, so she decided to end this battle before the changes arrived. It was just that she was unaware the changes had already occurred.

The swish was not the sound of the torrential rain, but the sound of two wings unfurling in the rain.

The green wings of over ten zhang in width unfurled behind her, accompanied by two streams of rainwater. They reflected the dusky light, causing the droplets of water to seem like droplets of blood. It was beautiful but also hair-raising.

The green wings suddenly flapped, causing crazy gusts of wind to rise on the stone platform before the main entrance. The droplets of water that fell from the sky were all shot away consecutively. A powerful Qi knocked all the rain back into the sky. Nanke disappeared from the edge of the stone platform, and in the next moment, she attacked Chen Changsheng with a few droplets of remaining blood and an extremely cold killing intent.

Chen Changsheng's gaze passed through these droplets of rain and the cold winds, and met with the small girl's gaze. He only saw her cold and resolute determination to kill. In that moment, his eyelashes stopped trembling from the cold wind due to the killing intent. The terrifying, full-powered strike of the small Demon

Princess actually caused him to fear that he could not resist it.

Although he thought like this, he did not give up, because he wanted to continue living. As a result, he grasped the dagger, and chopped towards the rain and cold wind before his eyes.

Afterwards, in the moment when he swung the dagger, he felt an extremely different feeling, so much that even his arm became stiff.

He did not have confidence that this strike could block Nanke's full-powered blow.

However, for some reason, he felt that he seemed to be very confident in the dagger in his hand.

The dagger pierced into the cold wind and rain.

The cold wind suddenly dispersed, and the cold rain suddenly stopped.

Only for a moment, the edge of the dagger broke through this storm, and arrived before Nanke's forehead.

The sword energy of this strike was not stable, his heart of the sword was not calm, and nor did he use any sword move.

However, the sword intent was unbelievably strong.

# Chapter 323 - The High-Spirited Second Move

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The strike really could not be considered a sword technique. The sword energy was also very unstable, and his heart of the sword was even more abominable. However, Chen Changsheng discovered a difference from his previous strike, suddenly and with some confusion.

Just what change could cause someone as level-headed as him to find it hard to maintain his mental state? In the moment he struck, he suddenly discovered that the dagger that had been with him for a very long time no longer belonged to him. The dagger had begun acting by itself, cutting through the wind and rain towards Nanke behind it. It seemed as though he had used the dagger to execute a complete sword move, but actually, it had nothing to do with him. In his original thoughts when facing up against Nanke's full-powered strike, he was prepared to use the move that had the greatest power in the True Sword of the Orthodoxy, but...

The dagger did not heed to his will and use the sword technique. Instead, it just pierced straight out like so.

This pierce was executed extremely recklessly and negligently. If there were bystanders to the battle who saw Chen Changsheng use this sword move, they would definitely believe he was looking to die.

Just what was this about? There was a power in his body—no, not power, nor Qi. Instead, it was a feeling that was very hard to describe with words, causing him to directly pierce at the wind and

rain in front of him with the dagger he grasped. His actions completely followed this feeling; the entire movement was extremely natural.

The strike that pierced through the cold wind and rain was not completely straight. The path that the edge travelled was crooked, and looked like a line that was carelessly left behind by a child who had just learnt to write. The style could not be seen at all, and it did not possess some kind of profound idea. However, the feeling instead originated directly from the depths of his heart, and he felt it very vividly.

Like sword energy, this feeling was the excitement of leaving an abyss. It was the ecstasy of being able to see the blue skies; it was elated and excited and it was in extremely high spirits.

For some reason, some unfathomable mystery, the dagger trembled excitedly.

How could such a sword pierce through the cold wind and rain, and block Nanke's full-forced blow head-on? How could it be victorious over the terrifyingly strong Demon Princess?

However, only for that moment, the dagger pierced forwards crookedly, easily piercing the wind and rain before him, before arriving in front of Nanke's eyes.

On the stone platform in front of the main entrance of the mausoleum, there was a very light stab, as if something had been pierced.

Closely following it, there was a thunderous hum, as if a huge bell had been rung by countless strong men carrying huge wooden hammers.

A strong tremble appeared, spreading in all directions in the air, creating floods of dust, rain and snow.

Amidst the dust, rain and snow, Nanke's angry roar reverberated just like in the battle at the peak of Sunset Valley. Her roar was still clear, but compared to that night, her current roar was no longer as steady, strong and confident. Instead, it was filled with pain, confusion and shock.

The powerful Qi immediately knocked all of the dust, rain and snow off the platform, creating a clear area.

Nanke quickly retreated. Her feet landed on the boundary between the stone platform and divine path, which gave a muffled bang. Several cracks immediately appeared at the gray rocks there.

A green plume around half a foot long slowly fell on the stone platform with a charming and beautiful feeling.

The gaze on Chen Changsheng from Nanke's small, pale face was filled with the flames of anger and a sliver of perplexity. A while later, she retracted her gaze, and looked at a certain area on her left moss-green wing. She only saw that there was a cut, slowly bleeding. The slightly dim light of the sky from the distant horizon shone through there.

Before the main entrance of the mausoleum, all fell into silence.

Probably because of the pain in her clear roar, Xu Yourong also woke up and saw this scene in front of her. She was slightly startled and speechless. Nanke once again stared at Chen Changsheng. Her gaze landed on the dagger held in his right hand, and her pupils constricted slightly. She did not understand—just why was the dagger so sharp? What was this sword technique? How did the sword intent become so strong?

Chen Changsheng also looked at the dagger in his hand. His expression was also slightly perplexed. It had already been over a year since his senior had given him this dagger, but just why did the dagger now give him a feeling of unfamiliarity? He knew this dagger possessed a sharpness rivalling the weapons of the Tier of Legendary Weapons, but why did this dagger have such a strong sword intent?

Yes, he had already confirmed it by now. The powerful feeling from before was sword intent. The dagger followed the feeling and pursued the feeling. The path it travelled in seemed ugly and crooked, but actually, it was extremely natural, like traversing between the clouds, like flowing in the water. This feeling obviously was sword intent. It could only be sword intent.

It was just that this sword intent... did not belong to him, because although the current him could already reach a brightly lit heart of the sword, his level of cultivation was still not enough to nurture such a great sword intent. Just where did the sword intent come from? If the dagger itself did not possess sword intent, just when

did it enter his body?

The knuckles of the hand he used to hold onto the hilt were rather white. He thought through feelings of perplexity and shock. Perhaps this was the sword intent that the Yellow Paper Umbrella had always searched for? Was this the strand of sword intent that had led him through the thick grasslands to the Mausoleum of Zhou? Had this sword intent not really disappeared? When did it come? Why did it come?

Because he understood even more about the sword intent, he thought even more. Nanke did not need to think this much, so she recovered much faster than him. Most of the shock and anger disappeared from her eyes, and recovered the indifference and lifelessness from before. Without any hesitation, she began to attack him once again. She had vaguely guessed something, and was prepared to confirm her guess through battle.

As for whether it would injure her, she had never cared about such matters.

The cold rain fell again, and the pair of wings that were over ten zhang in length created a hurricane. The wild wind blew again, turning the droplets of rain into gravel and using it to hit Chen Changsheng's face and body.

A cry of the peacock.

There was a clang.

Nanke appeared before him once again, and used the Southern Cross Sword in her left hand to chop at his forehead.

This was the first time she used the sword. In other words, the current Chen Changsheng in her eyes finally had become an opponent at the same level as Xu Yourong.

If this were any other time—a few days ago, or even just a few moments ago—Chen Changsheng would have found it very difficult to receive this strike. Although his heart of the sword was brightly lit, and his sword intent was flawless, compared to the terrifying sword intent that Nanke had poured into the Southern Cross Sword, it was much weaker. However, just at this moment, before he had even thought at all, he swung his dagger.

Actually, this was something that did not even require his thought.

The feeling once again appeared in his heart. He swung the dagger in his hand, completely following this feeling.

It seemed to be simple, but actually, it was mysterious and indescribable.

With a loud bang, several extremely deep cracks appeared on the gray stone ground before the main entrance of the mausoleum.

Nanke's Southern Cross Sword had been blocked by the dagger in

his hand.

Before she could even completely use all of the power of her Southern Cross Sword Technique, it had already been stopped by the dagger in his hand.

A sword ray burst out from the edge of the dagger. It was around three zhang in length, and seemed to illuminate the entire mausoleum.

The green wings retracted inwards, blocking in front of Nanke. With a painful, smothered grunt, she once again retreated rapidly backwards. Her two feet landed at the edge of the stone platform, and another crack appeared on the gray stone from her treading.

However, this was not all. The extremely sharp sword ray directly pierced through her pair of wings, and shot towards her forehead.

With a flap of the two wings that blew away rain, Nanke leapt, and landed on the divine path.

However, this was still not enough.

She leapt up once again, and retreated rapidly into the rainy space behind her.

Still not enough.

She needed to retreat, to constantly retreat.

The only sound was a series of cracks from the gray stone.

Her two feet were like plows. They dragged out two clear marks in the tough gray stone on the divine path. Only after she had travelled several hundred zhang backwards did she finally stop.

Silence.

The gray clouds in the sky constantly showered the ground with cold rain. The entire Mausoleum of Zhou was enveloped in it. No matter if it was the stone platform or the divine path, all had been drenched by it.

The sound of falling rain seemed to disappear.

A trail of fresh blood slowly flowed from the corner of Nanke's lips. Afterwards, it was quickly washed away by the cold rain that became heavier and heavier.

Chen Changsheng looked at the dagger in his hand and felt that extremely powerful sword intent. He did not know what he should think about.

Actually, that sword intent was not in the Yellow Paper Umbrella, nor was it in the dagger. It was in his body.

It was because the person that the sword intent wanted to help was him.

He raised his head and arrived at the boundary between the stone platform and the divine path. Looking at Nanke who was hundreds of zhang away and in the rain, he said, “Now, I seem to be able to win against you.”

Rainwater flowed from Nanke’s pale, small face. It dripped down from her wet black hair, and seemed rather miserable. However, her expression remained so cold, arrogant and condescending, that her defeat in the previous two strikes from just before could not be seen at all. Even without any leeway of being able to counterattack, her voice remained cold. “This is not your sword intent at all.”

Chen Changsheng went silent for a while and then said, “So?”

Nanke said without an expression, “Even if I am defeated, I will be defeated by that sword intent. What has it got to do with you?”

Yes, this sword intent could not belong to Chen Changsheng. No matter if it was her who battled against Chen Changsheng, the great Demon Generals that watched the battle on the divine path from below, the zither-playing old man, or Xu Yourong, who had just opened her eyes and witnessed this scene, they were all extremely clear on this point.

The sword intent was too sharp, and did not match up with the Dao Chen Changsheng cultivated at all. Most importantly, this

sword intent was too strong, a strength that could even make up for the difference in true essence. It could not be trained through time. If he wanted to train such a sword intent, he needed at least several hundred years of pursuing the path of the sword. He was only fifteen. No matter how talented he was in the path of the sword, he could not do this.

No one could do it, not even the demons.

Even if Zhou Dufu revived once again, he could not do that.

“Yes, this is not my sword intent.” Chen Changsheng looked at the endless grassland behind the monster tide that was like a black ocean, and then looked at Nanke. He said, “However, this sword intent came to find me, and is willing to be used by me. That is evidence that I have enough qualifications to use it. Then, it... is my sword intent.”

Nanke asked, “This sword intent... just where did it come from?”

Chen Changsheng looked into her eyes, and said honestly, “You should have guessed it.”

The surroundings of the mausoleum, on and above the divine path, fell into a period of shocked silence.

Although Nanke had already guessed the truth of this matter as Chen Changsheng had said, she was still unable to believe it, and felt very unwilling.

The torrential rain was concentrated, and the wet coldness pierced the bone. Her voice was slightly hoarse. “Sword Pool?”

# Chapter 324 - Return (Part One)

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The Sword Pool was in the Garden of Zhou. This was the legend and had at the same time been the speculation of many people over the years.

From one thousand years ago when Zhou Dufu first appeared and shocked the world up until several hundred years ago when he silently disappeared, the warlike and peerless expert had issued numerous challenges to the experts of the entire continent. His outrageous strength and cultivation had been continuously honed through these myriad battles. On his path to obtaining the title of supreme expert under the starry sky, countless people fell under his Halving Blade.

In Luoyang, he faced off against the hero of the realm and countless experts of the Great Zhou and defeated Emperor Taizong. Outside Xuelao City, he faced off against innumerable demon experts and defeated the Demon Lord. In the Mausoleum of Books, he defeated the Pope. At the source of the Red River, he defeated the White Emperor. And there were still many more... it could even be said that if one looked over those several hundred years of history and looked up all the true experts, one would see that they had all once been defeated at his hands.

In reality, besides those legendary battles mentioned above, many of these so-called earthshaking battles did not occur in the human world but in the Garden of Zhou. The Garden of Zhou was Zhou Dufu's miniature world. In these battles, he could have access to many conveniences and even rig the battles. This seemed very unfair, but his opponent had no objection to this, because he was Zhou Dufu. He disdained these types of actions, much less required

them. He just did not want any mediocre people to see his battle. His opponents were naturally even more unwilling to have the common people see them lose. Thus, those battles that occurred in the Garden of Zhou had no spectators, and also no recorders. As for the specific details of the battle, besides those present, no one else knew. The only thing the people on the outside knew was the unsurprising outcome.

Countless experts fell under his blade. Some died, some lived, but their swords were all left behind in the Garden of Zhou, forced by that divine Halving Blade, which was ranked second on the Tier of Legendary Weapons, to be left behind.

The swords were absolutely not ordinary. Many were even divine weapons ranked on the Tier of Legendary Weapons. These included the Dragoncry Sword that had been worn on the waist of some prince of the Imperial clan, and the sword called Heaven Shrouding owned by that generation's Mount Li Sword Sect sect master, which was even in the top ten of the Tier of Legendary Weapons. It was said that these famous swords abandoned in the Garden of Zhou had all been thrown into a mountain pool by Zhou Dufu. That mountain pool was the legendary Sword Pool. If the Sword Pool really did exist, it was a monument that Zhou Dufu had set up for himself. Those exceptional swords in the pool were his achievements and glory.

The one thing that all the cultivators who could enter the Garden of Zhou wanted to do was find the Sword Pool. Zhou Dufu's legacy might possibly be very difficult to find, but those swords in the Sword Pool, any one of them was a divine weapon capable of significantly increasing the battle power of any cultivator. Let alone that, if one could inherit the legacy of those experts of the

past through their sword, just what kind of significance would that have? How could it not cause people to go mad? And yet, no one had ever found the Sword Pool. No one had even found a sword in the Garden of Zhou. Contrarily, this fact was an affirmation of the rumors of the Sword Pool. Those famous swords that had faded away must be hidden somewhere in the Garden of Zhou.

As time passed, the Sword Pool grew more and more enigmatic, and its place within the hearts of cultivators grew increasingly majestic. It had even surpassed the Garden of Zhou itself, turning into the true legend of the cultivation world. But was it true that no one had ever found a sword in the Garden of Zhou? Then why was it that Qi Jian and Liang Xiaoxiao, once they had entered the Garden of Zhou, had proceeded without hesitation up that river? Why did Zhuang Huanyu go there? Why was Chen Changsheng able to sense that strand of sword intent in the cold pool, and why were the demons waiting to assassinate them on the other side?

Whether it was within the human world or the demon realm, there were already many powers that had faintly discovered some news pertaining to the Sword Pool. Perhaps it was because someone had picked up an ancient sword sheath in a forest by that river many years ago? No, the real reason was that a peerless genius of the Mount Li Sword Sect had once gone up to the cold pool at the end of that river and picked up a sword several hundred years ago.

That peerless genius of the Mount Li Sword Sect was called Su Li.

However, just where was the Sword Pool then? The cold pool passed through the cliff to the large lake on the other side. That

lake was connected to the small lake in the plains in front of Sunset Valley. However, between the pool and the lake, there were no swords. If one were simply and crudely to gather up all the clues and draw a line between these points, they would be able to see that this line pointed towards the depths of the plains. Then did this indicate that the legendary Sword Pool was in the plains?

In reality, this was the conclusion of the vast majority of cultivators. Human cultivators and demons had tracked their footsteps all across the Garden of Zhou, and yet after the passage of several hundred years, they still had not managed to find the Sword Pool. Then the most likely possibility was that it was hidden within the plains, because only they had not been investigated. It was a pity that these conclusions could never be confirmed. Everyone who entered the Plains of the Unsetting Sun had never returned. Those people who had never entered the Plains of the Unsetting Sun would never be able to see the true scene inside.

Luckily, or perhaps unluckily, Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong had entered these plains, and they could see the truth, although they could not relay these true facts to the human world outside the Garden of Zhou. That strand of sword intent had guided them deeper into the plains, as though it wanted to guide them towards finding the truth. Yet when they saw Zhou Dufu's mausoleum, they still did not see any trace of the Sword Pool.

Now that the sword intent was within his body, he was sure that it had its origins from the Sword Pool. He just did not know which famous sword from several hundred years ago this sword intent belonged to, and which famous person owned that sword.

The rain began to pour down harder and harder, causing the wind around the mausoleum to gradually grow more violent. A few leaves from Xu Yourong's wutong tree had previously been shaken down to the ground by Qi and then stuck together by the rain and snow. Now they were rolled up by the massive winds. The leaves were rolled up by the wind and dragged along the floor. They drifted to Chen Changsheng's feet and then floated up and touched a corner of his clothes.

Ching. There was a sharp sound in that instant that even covered up the sound of the wind and rain.

Those leaves had been sliced into countless tiny strands by the shapeless sword intent. Just as they began to dance in the air, they were beaten down by the wind and rain.

Several hundred li out on the divine path, Nanke's small face, which was drenched by the rainwater, seemed to grow paler.

This scene made her even more wary and uneasy because she had never seen such powerful sword intent before. Yes, she silently thought of the word 'never'. Her teacher Black Robe did not use a sword. Her royal father the Demon Lord did not use a sword. The demon advisor also did not use a sword. Still, the demon experts that could use a sword were too many to count, but she still had not...ever...seen such a powerful sword intent. This was just a strand of sword intent showing off its abilities. If the actual sword was still here, just how terrifying would it be? Several hundred years ago, just which peerless expert was the owner of that sword intent to have cultivated the sword to such a stage!?

The rain fell upon the dagger, splashing against the blade and wiping it clean of blood. It shined brightly like a mirror.

As Chen Changsheng gazed at the dagger, his eyes were also bright like a mirror.

In the three thousand scriptures of the Dao, there were many explanations on what sword intent was, but only one explanation was accepted by the Orthodoxy as the traditional definition—sword intent was a sword insight.

A sword insight was not a sword's spiritual sense, nor was it a sword's wisdom, and it was even less so a living soul. Rather, it was the remnants of a message that consisted of a swordsman's combat sense and experience which, after a long time, amassed and became attached to the sword. To use a more understandable but less accurate explanation: a sword insight was a sword's knowledge and experience. The sword insight was the remnants of a message, and it could also be described as the essence of that message. It was the crystallization of combat sense, but it was not something that had a concrete and objective existence. It was impossible to calculate, and even more impossible to imitate. The sensation transmitted back to the spiritual world of a human being was only a feeling.

At the moment, he was feeling exactly this type of feeling.

From this sword intent, he sensed an absolute self-confidence, a supreme ability, and a contempt for heaven and earth. He sensed this sword intent's conflict and even loathing for these plains. He sensed its intense desire for freedom. Of course, the most intense

feeling was joy, jumping for joy.

At the very beginning, the person who used the sword was no more, but the sword was still there. Later on, the sword was no more, leaving behind only the sword intent. This strand of sword intent was incapable of leaving these plains. It was trapped, or even imprisoned, within these plains for ages. For several hundred years, it had never thought about escaping. However, it now realized that there was a chance to escape, thus when it met Chen Changsheng, it was like a bird about to leave its cage.

It was just that he did not know that this sword intent's ecstasy did not just come from the possibility of leaving, but also had to do with the joy of seeing an old friend.

That massive and dreadful shadow took up half the sky. The other half of the sky was filled with dark rain clouds. It was already night, and that disc of light at the edge of the plains was dim and lightless. In the midst of the torrential rain, the Mausoleum of Zhou grew even more pitch-black, like a massive black mountain. If Chen Changsheng was not on top of this black mountain at the moment, he would definitely have associated it with the huge obsidian coffin in the mausoleum.

Let's leave together then.

Chen Changsheng turned back to glance at Xu Yourong, then said these words to the sword intent.

She gazed at the rain-soaked divine path, gazed at Nanke.

Nanke was looking at the Southern Cross Sword in her hands. There was a very clear nick on the edge of the sword, a result of their two swords crossing. This sword was certainly not ordinary, as it was a famous sword from this generation's Tier of Legendary Weapons, and yet it was not as good as that unremarkable and ordinary dagger in Chen Changsheng's hands.

Did every sword have an environment in which it was strongest? She woke up from the stupor brought about by the sword intent and the new information related to the Sword Pool with an understanding of many more things. She lifted her head towards the end of the divine path where Chen Changsheng was, her expression once more callous and indifferent.

"So what? That sword intent really is very strong, but in the end, it still ended up the loser against the Halving Blade. You think that you can rely on this sword intent to defeat me? Or do you have some absurd hope that this sword intent can help you leave the Garden of Zhou?"

She said these words to Chen Changsheng and then spread out her arms. A clear light illuminated the rain-soaked mausoleum, and her two wings transformed into streams of light. Her two maids, Hua Cui and Ning Qiu, kneeled down behind her in the rain, not daring to say a word as they lowered their heads. One could faintly see that their faces were pale. The injuries inflicted by that sword intent previously had most likely not been light.

"The sword that this sword intent belongs to has probably already become a piece of scrap metal or even mere dust. This is

the only reason why it was able to leave the Sword Pool. As a sword intent with no host, incapable of replenishing itself, just how long could it hold on? Not to mention the fact that sword intent is equivalent to sword insight, and with your cultivation, there's simply no way for you comprehend the sword insight. Without an understanding of swordplay, I'm afraid you won't be able to display even one-thousandth of the full power of that sword intent. Since this is the case, just what makes you believe you can defeat me?"

In the downpour, along with the continuous sound of her still childish voice, Nanke's sword energy slowly but steadily increased, and her Qi gradually grew more berserk.

Chen Changsheng knew that she was not bluffing. If the swordsman's cultivation was strong enough, whether they were meditating in cultivation or fighting, they would be refining their sword intent at every moment. However, if the level of the sword intent was higher than that of the swordsman, then battling would constantly use up the sword intent with no way of replenishing it.

"The most important part is that since I'm no match for you in terms of sword intent, then why do I need to keep competing with you in sword intent?" Saying these words, Nanke lifted up the Southern Cross Sword.

She still stood a hundred zhang away, very far away from Chen Changsheng. She had already put away her two wings, and it seemed that she did not intend to close the distance between the two of them. The most important change was that she lifted her sword with both hands. Her figure was very petite, even slim,

while the Southern Cross Sword was broad and long. When she lifted it up with her two hands into the air, it produced a very strange scene. It was just like a small child preparing to play with a giant iron hammer. They struck a clear contrast.

Seeing this scene, Chen Changsheng instantly guessed at how she was going to attack and understood that he had committed a huge oversight.

Since his greatest advantage was the powerful sword intent at his disposal, he should not have let her get too far away.

Different swords had different strengths. One sword had many different sides. Sword intent was only a part of the sword. Besides this, there was also sword energy as well as the amount of true essence attached to the sword. They were both components of the sword that were no less important than sword intent. Nanke's attack intended to take advantage of the influence that distance had on sword intent and force him to fight with sword energy and strength.

A sword glow illuminated the gloomy sky and the rain-soaked mausoleum.

A dark blue sword ray shot out from the Southern Cross Sword. Like a meteorite, it trailed a tail of fire as it slashed towards the end of the divine path at Chen Changsheng.

Chen Changsheng gripped the hilt of his dagger; his fingers were a little white and his lips a little pale, perhaps because of his

injuries or because the rain was too cold.

A weak, yet abnormally firm voice came from behind him. "Use the umbrella."

This voice did not come from the sword intent, as sword intents do not speak. The voice came from Xu Yourong. He did not know why she said this, but over the course of their journey, he had realized that her cultivation and especially her foresight far surpassed his. He trusted her invariably. So without any hesitation, not even pausing for thought, he lifted up the Yellow Paper Umbrella.

With his actions, the sword intent entered the Yellow Paper Umbrella.

It was not entering. It was returning.

He did not understand why he felt it, but he felt that this sensation indicated that the sword intent had truly returned. Even the entire world seemed to have felt the sword intent's return. The plains grew incredibly quiet. The monster tide grew restless and countless monsters gave out cries of alarm or anger. Even that dreadful shadow in the sky seemed to grow fainter for an instant.

# Chapter 325 - Return (Part Two)

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The sword intent entered the Yellow Paper Umbrella. The world surrounding the mausoleum was affected, but the first to undergo changes was obviously the Yellow Paper Umbrella itself.

The Yellow Paper Umbrella remained as it was normally, old-fashioned and slightly dirty. No changes occurred to its appearance, but the Qi exuding from it instead changed drastically. Despite being an umbrella-shaped magical artifact with extremely great defensive capabilities, it had suddenly acquired the semblance of an inordinately sharp sword. In Chen Changsheng's eyes, it clearly was still an umbrella, but he could feel the clear feeling of a sword in his hand.

The blue sword ray arrived. With it, it carried Nanke's resolute killing intent and an extremely powerful true essence.

Chen Changsheng raised the Yellow Paper Umbrella to receive it. Like a round shield, it attempted to block the enemy's long spear.

Several dozen days ago, by the lake on the other side of the cliff in the Garden of Zhou, when he battled against the two maids, he had also used this method a lot. However, very obviously, the Yellow Paper Umbrella today already had a huge difference to the Yellow Paper Umbrella of that day. Was it because of the sword intent? However, it was also completely different from the sword intent emitted by the dagger previously. They were two different concepts.

The difference was that the Yellow Paper Umbrella now infused with the sword intent became extremely powerful, even somewhat scary.

On the stone platform in front of the main entrance of the mausoleum, countless sharp cutting sounds suddenly resounded. The sounds were reminiscent of the cracks in space and also like the rush of air. They seemed brief and occurred in close tandem one after another, but they also seemed to go on without end. Countless blades of winds that seemed thin and small shot out from the surface of the Yellow Paper Umbrella, twisting around the surroundings of his body. It spun at great speeds, cutting everything that it came into contact with.

The rain, the snow, the platform and the path, as well as the blue sword ray.

The droplets of rain from the sky were cut into vapor, and the leftover snow that gathered on the ground was chopped into strands. On the tough ground, the stone walls and even the main entrance of the mausoleum, countless deep streaks appeared. As for the blue sword ray that travelled through the air, before it could even radiate with the two streaks of stars that formed a Southern Cross, it was chopped into countless rays of star brilliance and dispersed with the wind.

The sharp sounds of cutting slowly grew softer before disappearing.

The thin blades of wind slowly entered the stone precipices of the mausoleum, not appearing again.

The torrential rain continued, but compared to before, it seemed to have weakened a lot, especially the rain that landed on the Yellow Paper Umbrella.

Silence.

In the grassland below the mausoleum, it instead slowly began to grow noisy, like waves formed in the monster tide that was like a black ocean. There were signs of restlessness.

Before, when the sword intent entered Chen Changsheng's body and was put to use in his dagger, the monster tide was still able to remain peaceful. However, when the sword intent entered the Yellow Paper Umbrella and then easily shattered Nanke's sword energy, and proved something, the countless monsters in the grassland were unable to control themselves.

Some monsters attempted to flee in fear, and even more monsters roared angrily at the mausoleum. Countless roars fused together, and like the sound of thunder, it was about to lift up the sky. If it were not for Nanke's forceful suppression with the Soul Wood, perhaps at this moment, the black ocean formed from the monster tide would have already surged towards the mausoleum.

Nanke did not know why the monsters reacted so dramatically. Was it because the appearance of the sword intent heralded the emergence of the Sword Pool? Then why was the monster tide not as turbulent as when the sword intent appeared in the beginning? She was slightly confused. Her gaze passed through the rain and

landed on Xu Yourong. Earlier, it was her who made Chen Changsheng put away the dagger and use the umbrella.

The people present today were all powerful experts. Xu Yourong had not recovered from her heavy injuries and was extremely weak. She spent most of the time with her eyes closed and did not spectate this battle, but she actually understood something. This caused Nanke to feel slightly angry and unwilling, just like when the sword intent was used by Chen Changsheng.

Here, Tang Thirty-Six's famous judgement still should have been used. Xu Yourong and Chen Changsheng really were two people who specialised in rendering people speechless.

Xu Yourong maintained her focus and looked at the agitated monster tide beneath the mausoleum. She said weakly, "Close the umbrella."

Chen Changsheng listened to her and closed the Yellow Paper Umbrella.

After the umbrella was closed, it was very much like a sword. Most people have probably had a similar experience of stabbing the tip of an umbrella into the dirt or at the walls for fun once the rain let up.

Why? Because after an umbrella was closed, it was very much like a sword.

At this moment, the Yellow Paper Umbrella in Chen Changsheng's left hand was very much like a sword.

The monster tide surrounding the mausoleum immediately fell silent.

The roars of anger also disappeared.

The agitated monsters that attempted to surge towards the mausoleum became rather terrified, as if something major was about to happen. In the depths of the monster tide, the great monsters at the level of Star Condensation that were like mountains and rivers began to exude their ruthless Qi that reeked of blood. The huge shadow in the sky drooped slightly lower than before.

The Sword Pool was the greatest secret of the Garden of Zhou. The sword was the greatest taboo of the grassland.

Just what connection did the sword intent and the Sword Pool it represented have with the countless monsters that ran amok in the Plains of the Unsetting Sun? Xu Yourong silently calculated and deduced, which rapidly consumed her energy. Her complexion became paler and paler. In the end, her gaze landed on the umbrella in Chen Changsheng's hand and thought, looks like that was the legendary Yellow Paper Umbrella.

In the world outside the Garden of Zhou, it snowed as usual.

The huge shadow in the sky drooped even lower than before. Far away in the snowy plains, a dozen or so Demon Generals towered like mountains, exuding great Qi that reeked of blood. As of that moment, there was already one Demon General dead and seven Demon Generals heavily injured, with three of the seven missing limbs. The demons had already paid a heavy enough price.

The snowflakes that landed on Su Li's shoulder were immediately cut into countless shreds.

There was blood on his sword, but no blood on his body. He seemed as though he was uninjured, but he had actually already expended a great amount. He was unable to contain the sword intent inside himself well enough, which caused it to seep outwards.

Black Robe sat on a snowy hill with his legs crossed. Looking at him, he said calmly, “Although you are called [Su Li](#), you are unable to leave today.”

(TL: Play on words. Su Li is 苏离, and leave is 离.)

Su Li looked at that shadow in the sky and said nothing.

“What you like eating the most, what you dislike eating the most; how many people you killed in the Great Western Continent, whether you like mountains or the sea; how often you send your daughter letters, how long it took you to master your first sword technique after you entered the Mount Li Sword Sect; how many times you've argued with your master, how many days you've cried for after your master died in the Garden of Zhou...”

Black Robe used his slender fingers to stroke the square plate that was placed before his legs and said, “I have used all the information that I have gathered about you in this plot. How can you leave?”

Su Li retracted his gaze and looked at him. He laughed at him, “I hate people like you the most. Obviously, in the end, you still rely on power to kill and slaughter, yet you also like to talk reason, talk chance. Even if you were at your last breath and almost dead, you will not forget to act as if you can cope with all matters using schemes and strategies. Who are you acting for?”

A soft laugh resounded from the black robes, “Naturally for someone like you who has been schemed to death by me.”

Su Li smiled coldly, “Do you really believe that everything can be calculated?”

Black Robe said, “Why not?”

“You obviously know that the stars can be moved. Since the stars can be moved, where does it say that fate cannot change? With change, how can you calculate?

Su Li gazed at the night sky. He did not see the convergence of those two rivers of stars in the south, and only saw the snowflakes that constantly fell before the shadow. With a soft voice, he said, “Everything in the world is constantly changing. After a long time of snowing, accumulating more and more, there will always be a

moment where an avalanche occurs. How do you calculate that?”

“The path of the sword is not snow, and cultivation is not snowing. I don’t see how quantity affects quality. You are also unable to break out of this desperate strait.”

Black Robe knew of what matter was being implied with the statement regarding the snow, and said calmly, “Because you are a peerless genius in the path of the sword.”

This phrase was a compliment, and it came from the mouth of the military advisor of the demons who was the most mysterious in the whole continent. Even Su Li should have felt proud, but this phrase was more-so a devastating criticism.

A peerless genius in the path of the sword. If he could break though, he would have long since broken through, regardless if that was due to the great terror between life and death or some other methods.

Black Robe continued, “You are unable to reach completion in the path of the sword, but that’s not because of fundamental reasons such as talent, comprehension, resolution, or even the most crucial, luck. You never lacked those, and because of that, you’ve lacked a very important thing. Something integral to the path of the sword.”

Su Li obviously understood what he was saying.

“The path of the sword is to cultivate the sword.”

Black Robe's voice did not have any intonation due to emotions, and he made a cold, final conclusion, “Without a sword that matches up to you, your path of the sword will never be complete.”

# Chapter 326 - The Outstandingness Of A Renowned Sword

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The path of the sword obviously was about cultivating the sword. The sword was naturally important. But... was it really that important? Other than impacting the strength in battle, could it really influence the level of cultivation of the user?

Currently, the sword in Su Li's hand originated from a smithy in a small town under Mount Li. It was personally forged by the obscure blacksmith in the smithy, Luo Dagen, after spending a few silvers and half a day. It had already been with him for over twenty years. With this ordinary longsword that could not be regarded as divine weaponry no matter how it was looked at, he remained as the strongest person in the path of the sword in the world. Before the sword, those who blocked it were easily split open. Just before, it had just killed a Demon General.

Also because of his ordinary sword, the idea of returning to the simplest form for the sword was commonly practiced in the Mount Li Sword Sect. The Divine State's Seven Laws and other young disciples admired the junior martial uncle, all trying to copy him. Qiushan Jun possessed the extremely famous Dragonscale Sword, yet when he traversed the continent, or even during that battle where he fought for the key to the Garden of Zhou against the demon experts, he was only willing to use an ordinary sword. The sword also originated from the small town beneath Mount Li, also originated from the same smithy and also was bought with a few silvers. Guan Feibai was also like that. However, it did not influence the status of Qiushan Jun and Guan Feibai amongst the experts of the younger generation. They carried ordinary steel swords, and were also a part of the Divine State's Laws.

“Some stupid people probably won’t understand this.” Black Robe gently wiped away the snowflakes on the square plate. He looked at Su Li quietly and said, “But I understand that as long as you don’t find that sword, all swords are the same to you, no matter if it’s that Killing Autumn from Scholartree Manor or the inferior sword from that smithy.”

“Yes.” Su Li stayed quiet for a while, and then said, “I indeed lack a sword. I have always been looking for that sword.”

Many years ago, when he was brought to Mount Li by his master from his home town, he walked through a mountain path of several dozen li in length and entered the sect. He became an inner sect disciple in the Mount Li Sword Sect, and used a very short amount of time to grasp the secrets of the Mount Li Sword Style. His talent in the path of the sword was slowly revealed, and he gained the dear love of his seniors and the admiration of his juniors. However, he never had his own sword.

When they were giving out swords in the sword hall of Red Rock Peak, he did not choose. When he practiced every day and when he sparred with his seniors, he always used a wooden sword. When his seniors asked why he was unwilling to choose a sword, he said that he did not like the swords in the sword hall. Actually, in his heart, there was always a feeling that those swords also disliked him, and avoided him.

After an entire year, he completed the study of the basic sword style. He began to pry into the truths of the path of the sword, and finally gained the seniority to enter the main peak to enter his

master's dwelling. His master was the sect master of the Mount Li Sword Sect, a peerless expert in the path of the sword recognised by the entire continent. However, he did not listen to what his master was saying at all, and only looked at the sword that hung behind his master.

The sheath of the sword was pitch-black, and made of some material that he did not know. The sword was in the sheath, and he could not see its true appearance, but for some reason, he began to like the sword as he looked at it. He became happy and wanted to dance in joy, to grab it, to hug it, to sleep with it and even bathe with it. What caused him to be even happier was that the sword resonated with a soft, pleasant sound in the sheath, as if it was responding to his fondness, and also displaying its own benevolence.

Back then, Su Li naturally did not know that this was the sword of the sect master of the Mount Li Sword Sect. It was the famous Heaven Shrouding Sword that was in the top ten on the Tier of Legendary Weapons.

The sect master of the Mount Li Sword Sect felt slightly astonished. His sword was a peerless, fearful sword. It was the sharpest in the world and extremely cold, able to sever emotions and light. Why did it give off such a soft sword resonance today, and why was it so gentle to the little boy? What did it mean? Afterwards, he began to laugh. Because Su Li was his only disciple, the sword clearly had to be passed down, and looking at it then, they did not seem to dislike each other, which was very fortunate.

That day, Su Li received the promise of his master to pass the

sword to him in the future. This made him extremely happy. It was also the reason why, when his master hit his bottom and made him copy out the sword manual five hundred times for him breaking the rules of the sect thirty-seven times in the entire year, he did not even talk back, which was extremely rare.

Afterwards... his master entered the Garden of Zhou. After that, there was no afterwards. His master never returned. That sword also never returned. Su Li cried for three days and three nights at the main peak, and then sat in a stupor for seven days and seven nights before returning to his senses. He threw himself into the cultivation of the path of the sword once again, but this time, his seniors discovered that there was a sword at his waist.

The sword came from a small town under Mount Li, from an unremarkable smithy. It came from an obscure blacksmith at that time, who was the grandfather of the current blacksmith Luo Dagen.

With the change of seasons, time slowly passed. Su Li reached an initial success in his path of the sword, and left Mount Li to go to the Garden of Zhou.

In the several decades following, he entered the Garden of Zhou every ten years. This naturally also meant that in those several decades, the control of the Garden of Zhou always remained in the hands of humans, so the demons could never even lay a finger on it. The reason for this was because he wanted to enter the Garden of Zhou. Who could steal the key to the Garden of Zhou under his sword?

He had two objectives for entering the Garden of Zhou. First of all, he wanted to confirm the death of Zhou Dufu. If the greatest expert under the stars was already dead, it was naturally the end of the matter. If he was still alive, Su Li wanted to know just exactly how great of a difference there was between him and Zhou Dufu, and how much more time he needed to defeat him, given that Su Li was at the upper level of Ethereal Opening at that time.

Actually, he wanted to find the sword that was forgotten in the Garden of Zhou. Perhaps the stars never betrayed the hopes of people, or perhaps the Heaven Shrouding Sword could feel his longing: last time he entered the Garden of Zhou, Su Li actually found it by the stream in the forest. At the same time, the sword became the first and only sword that had been brought out by someone from the Garden of Zhou.

However, the sword intent of the sword had completely disappeared, only leaving behind the sword body. Although the materials that made the sword were rare and valuable treasures, it was no longer the sword from years ago.

The renowned sword was the same as before, but it was no longer outstanding.

Only after staying silent by the stream for a very long time did Su Li finally accept this matter.

The sword was still there, but the sword intent was not. As it turned out, his master... truly was not there anymore.

Carrying the sword that had already lost its spirit, Su Li left the Garden of Zhou and travelled to the Tang Clan in Wenshui City to look for the Old Master of the Tang Clan who was still willing to forge once in a while. He wished that the Old Master could think of a method to revive the sword. Just what status did the Old Master have? Why would he have paid any attention to the almost idiotic request of a second generation disciple of the Mount Li Sword Sect? He did not pay any attention to him at all. Su Li only did one thing. He stood in a stone embankment of the Wenshui Tang Clan hidden deep within the mountains, and used a night to undergo several breakthroughs from the upper level of the Ethereal Opening Realm, arriving at the peak level of the Star Condensation Realm.

As the richest person on the continent, the thing that the Old Master of the Tang Clan was most skilled at was judging value. He knew that Su Li was displaying his value to him, and admitted that Su Li definitely did have that value. As a result, he changed his mind without any hesitation at all, beginning to collect and buy valuable materials from all over the place, attempting to do as Su Li had requested: to revive the renowned sword.

Unfortunately, even the Wenshui Tang Clan was unable to completely satisfy Su Li's request.

The memory stopped there. This was because what happened afterwards made even him, who was the most unrestrained and uninhibited, or in other words, the most thick-skinned, to feel slightly awkward.

He looked at the patch of shadow in the night sky, and could feel

the Demon Lord's unfathomable will. He thought with some ridicule that if that sword was able to be revived and was in his hand at the current moment, even the Demon Lord would be unlikely to warrant his attention.

The shadow in the sky drooped lower and lower, as if it was going to come in contact with the grassland far away.

Chen Changsheng held onto the Yellow Paper Umbrella and looked at this scene. He did not know exactly why the gazes of the terrifying monsters in the monster tide held coldness and a deathly stillness.

He did not know that the shadow in the sky was the shadow of a great peng. He did not know that this great peng, which already had half a step into the realm of Saints, was the mount of Zhou Dufu years ago. Crucially, he did not know that when the sword intent returned to the Yellow Paper Umbrella, it meant that the Sword Pool could appear at any time. Towards that terrifying great peng, he did not know how great of a provocation it was.

Nanke's black hair was scattered on her shoulders. It was wet due to the rain, and seemed extremely messy. Her small face was pale, and the indifference in her eyes was already long replaced by rage. Before, when they clashed, even though they were separated by a distance of over one hundred zhang, the swift and fierce sword intent had still injured her. She did not understand why the sword intent would actually become so terrifying after entering the Yellow Paper Umbrella.

“No matter how strong the sword intent is, so what? You don’t

know the sword style, so just how long can you last just by relying on sword intent?"

Hearing the voice of the small demon girl, Chen Changsheng originally wanted to say something, but in the end, he did not say it. Even if he were able to use the sword intent without limit, he would still be unable to solve the problem of the monster tide that was like an ocean around the mausoleum.

With an angry and clear whoosh, the cold wind on the divine path began blowing again. With the ruffling of her heavy dress in the wind and the slight movement of rainwater, Nanke raised her sword to swing again.

Two sword rays erupted from the edge of the Southern Cross Sword. Like two streaks of starlight they chopped towards Chen Changsheng along the straight divine path.

Chen Changsheng raised the Yellow Paper Umbrella to receive it. Hundreds of tiny wind blades burst out from the surface of the umbrella, and with closely-packed cutting sounds, the unbelievably swift and fierce sword intent directly cut through the two streaks of starlight, before shattering them into countless pieces. The stone platform in front of the main entrance of the mausoleum was covered with specks of starlight, floating like a sea of fireflies.

Just at this moment, there was the sound of a zither.

The ground below the divine path had long been wet due to the

torrential rain. The old man sat cross-legged in the rain with the zither on his knees. He lowered his head and played a tune with concentration.

The old man was an elder of the Candle Shadow Shamans, and specialised most in mental attacks. It was unknown how much danger was hidden in the sound of the zither that was like the noise of water. The rain that fell from the sky struck the zither string at the same time as his finger. Afterwards, it was shaken into mist by the trembling of the zither string, and with the metallic or breezy sound of the zither, the mist vaguely appeared to be substance.

This was not a thing that truly did exist, but a great spiritual sense. It was like a mountain ghost, like a shaman tiger, and suddenly left the zither on the old man's knees. Like a hurricane, it arrived on the stone platform. It did not blow away the specks of starlight that was like a sea of fireflies, but instead avoided the Yellow Paper Umbrella surreptitiously. It transformed into several strands of cold wind, landing on Chen Changsheng's face.

# Chapter 327 - A Very Heavy Sword

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The wind was somewhat cold and hurt a little as it jabbed against his face. However, it was only a cold wind, not a mental assault from the old zither-player. Those mountain ghosts and those misty shaman tigers seemed to have avoided the Yellow Paper Umbrella, but how could they ever have really avoided it?

The Yellow Paper Umbrella in Chen Changsheng's hand required countless precious materials used by the Tang Clan in its construction, necessitating the Old Master of the Tang clan to forge it personally. If the holder of this umbrella possessed a high enough cultivation, this umbrella could disperse all spiritual attacks. Even if his current cultivation was not enough, it was sufficient to sever Black Robe's observations from outside the Garden of Zhou, so what did the mental attacks from zither-playing old man amount to? Yet the zither-playing old man taking action was a dangerous signal. It indicated that Nanke had ceased to stubbornly hold onto her pride. The demon experts were highly likely to attack as one, from all sides.

This truthfully made Chen Changsheng very vigilant. Teng Xiaoming and Liu Wan'er, the Demon General couple, had been silently standing down the divine path, just as inconspicuous as their names, but he had never once forgotten them. At the lakeshore on the other side of that cliff, this Demon General couple had exhibited a terrifying strength. In truth, this Demon General couple were already true experts at the upper level of Star Condensation. Besides the Five Saints, the Eight Storms, experts like Su LI, who could easily defeat them? Even after they entered the Garden of Zhou and forcefully suppressed their strength down to the upper level of Ethereal Opening, they still kept their combat experience and awareness. If comparing solely in terms of battle

prowess, they would most likely be even stronger than Nanke.

Nanke's sword energy had still not been completely slashed to pieces by his sword intent. Like a cloud of fireflies, the starlight danced on the surface of his umbrella. His gaze looked over the edge of the Yellow Paper Umbrella, over Nanke's shoulder, and landed at the end of the divine path. His expression abruptly turned cold. In the middle of the rainstorm, Liu Wan'er smiled at him, her expression warm and serene. She was like a mother leaning on a door, waiting for her child to come home. But that middle-aged man with the honest expression was no longer by her side. Just where did he go?

Suddenly the space above the divine path exploded with a thunderclap! The cold wind around the mausoleum seemed to freeze at this thunderclap, but the falling rain seemed to grow even more frenzied.

Chen Changsheng lifted his head upwards, but all he saw in the gloomy sky was a black speck.

The black speck fell along with the boundless torrent of rain, falling faster and faster. In a short period of time, it had grown many times larger, gradually appearing to be a mountain before his eyes.

The twenty-fourth Demon General Teng Xiaoming had transformed into a heavy mountain peak, his hands holding an unremarkable carrying pole. With a shrill whistle that pierced through the air, he fell from the sky with the wind and rain, with an unequaled berserk power!

Seeing this scene, Chen Changsheng's face suddenly paled, but his eyes were still as calm as before. Without any fear, the dagger in his right hand pierced through the curtain of rain and came to meet Teng Xiaoming.

The Yellow Paper Umbrella in his left hand was currently occupied with blocking Nanke's two streams of starlight and the zither-playing old man's pouncing shaman tigers, so it could not move. If he wanted to use the umbrella to block Teng Xiaoming's heavy blow, he could only move closer to the umbrella. Yet to do this would leave him with no retreat. He would only be able to passively defend, so he chose to forgo this option and instead chose to attack. In this tense moment, he did not forget to split up the sword intent in the Yellow Paper Umbrella and send some into the dagger.

With a massive boom, the stone platform violently shuddered. The pools of rainwater on the ground were like a pack of frightened ghosts, tearing themselves apart in transformation in an attempt to escape. This rainwater turned into a cloud of mist. In the back of the mist in a corner, Xu Yourong also suffered from the vibrations. Her face instantly turned pale and she could no longer endure her injuries. In extreme pain, she closed her eyes and began to adjust her breathing to resist.

The mist settled. Chen Changsheng stood in the same place, but was somewhat shorter than he used to be. Upon close examination, it was apparent that his two legs had actually buried themselves into the firm gray stone, making it seem like he did not have knees!

The heavy strike of Teng Xiaoming falling from the rain like a mountain had truly been too frightening. Chen Changsheng had relied on the dagger and that split-off strand of sword intent to firmly receive it. Even though his body had been washed in the true blood of the Black Dragon, it still felt like it would shatter. From his brow to his collarbone, down his spine and to his ankles, every bone in his body was wracked with an unbearable pain. His right hand incessantly trembled, just like a sickened old man's. If he did not know that he would be dead without this dagger, his right hand would have already let go of the hilt.

Teng Xiaoming stood in the rain, expressionless.

His right hand held that carrying pole, but it was really an iron staff, thicker than an average person's arm. It was constructed from an alloy of the Demon Mountain's Secret Iron and two taels of the True Metal of Meteorites. It was incredibly firm. On the battlefield in the snowy plains, who knew how many experts of the Great Zhou army it had smashed to death? Now, this iron staff was covered with several dozen deep sword marks. The upper end of the staff was especially affected, a chunk of it having been shorn off.

The iron staff had only collided with Chen Changsheng's dagger for an instant, but it had suffered so many sword scars. It had to be said that this dagger's sharpness had already reached an unimaginable level. That sword intent was even more powerful, so quick and forceful that it would cause the heart to turn cold. But Teng Xiaoming had no reaction to this. He silently gazed at Chen Changsheng, just like an actual mountain. No matter how fierce the storm, it still did not rock his body in the slightest. He exuded a particularly solemn and serene aura.

This was a true expert. Chen Changsheng naturally thought this as he gazed at this demon man standing in the rain, then he began to think about even more things. Just as Nanke had said before, he could barely express one-thousandth of the true power of this sword intent; how could it be enough to defeat such a powerful opponent? Most importantly, with his current level of strength and cultivation, if he wanted to block and even defeat this iron staff, the combination of this sword intent and dagger was far from enough. He needed a sword that could better display the power of that sword intent.

He needed a heavier sword.

As he was thinking about these things, Teng Xiaoming once again lifted his iron staff. That staff scored with sword scars seemed even more frightening than it was before. The rain falling around the staff suddenly parted. A thunderous sound erupted from above the divine path. The iron staff whistled through the air, the wind and rain making way for it.

At this moment, Nanke's sword energy had finally been completely sliced apart by the sword intent emitted by the Yellow Paper Umbrella and the old zither-player's mental attack had also been blocked. Chen Changsheng could now try to use the Yellow Paper Umbrella to receive that iron pole. His face was still pale, but it was no longer because he was tense. Rather, it was because he was too cold, and also because his heart was uneasy about the last idea that had come up in his mind.

He could use the Yellow Paper Umbrella to receive this iron staff,

but he did not want to. This was because he faintly sensed that the sword intent attached to the Yellow Paper Umbrella, although strong without compare, was not the best method to block the iron staff at his level of cultivation. He still felt that he needed a heavier sword.

In reality, this umbrella was his only resort, because he did not have a heavier sword. And yet... he felt that he should have a heavier sword.

Just as Chen Changsheng thought of this, a change occurred at some place in the plains south of the mausoleum.

In this faraway place, the rain was much lighter than the rain around the mausoleum. The surface of the water below the underbrush was lightly beat upon by the drizzle. Suddenly, for some reason, the ground began to sink. The pools of water in the seemingly descending plains suddenly fused together with the rain falling from the sky, transforming into a ball of water. They clumped together, as if there was something extremely heavy in the ground that was sucking in everything around it.

From deep within the dusky sky came a furious cry. This cry came from the great peng. Just what was about to emerge that could provoke its fury so, such that one could even hear its wariness and unease?

The heavy iron staff split the wind and rain on the divine path and came to the front door of the mausoleum. It was only a bit more than ten zhang away from Chen Changsheng, yet he did not lift the Yellow Paper Umbrella. With a clear cry, he had even

returned the dagger to its sheath.

He did not know why he was doing this. Why did he need to sheath his dagger?

Just at this moment, a massive rumbling came from outside the mausoleum, like true thunder had reached the ground. Compared to this thunder, the thundering of the iron staff seemed like firecrackers lit by a small child for the new year.

A pitch-black object burst through the rain and arrived in front of Chen Changsheng, then sat in front of him, unmoving.

It was a sword, black and cast from some unknown metal. There was no design on the blade, and it was not very smooth. It seemed especially rough and coarse, even like it did not have an edge. It was just like a sword that had not been completely cast. In short, this metal sword did not have a single special characteristic and emitted no Qi that would cause someone to raise their eyebrows. It was just very broad and very long, very thick and very black, so it seemed... very heavy.

Chen Changsheng had wanted a heavier sword.

Thus a heavy sword had appeared before him, calmly floating in the rain.

The metal sword's hilt was inclined downwards. He only needed to stretch out his hand and he would be able to very easily grasp it.

The metal sword's posture was extremely comfortable, so comfortable that without a thought, he had lifted up his hand.

His right hand passed through several seemingly unmoving curtains of rain and grasped the hilt.

The hilt of this metal sword was very rough, very thick, and very crude. When it seemed like his hands had completely gripped the hilt, he clearly felt a sense of weight. At this moment, he also realized something else. That sword intent attached to the Yellow Paper Umbrella did not heed the commands of his spiritual sense and use his body to enter that metal sword. Because the metal sword originally had its own sword intent, the sword intent in the Yellow Paper Umbrella felt it unworthy or did not want to compete with that powerful sword intent. With Chen Changsheng's current strength and cultivation of the sword, he could not accurately perceive the strength of that metal sword's sword intent, but he could clearly sense that the sword intent was just like that metal sword, incomparably heavy.

He drew back his hand, taking the metal sword out of the rain.

In order to remove this metal sword from the rain, he required an incredible amount of strength. Simultaneously, this weighty sword gifted him with an incredible strength. He brandished the metal sword and chopped down at the iron staff that was flying through the rain.

The metal sword met with the iron staff in the midst of the downpour.

There was an extremely brief moment of silence, then a continuous explosion of thunderclaps. The rain was shattered into pieces, transforming into myriad water arrows, and shooting out in a sphere at every direction. The wall of the mausoleum became filled with countless deep caves and was riddled with holes. A clear light emerged from the Tong Bow behind Xu Yourong. It protected her, but it could not protect Chen Changsheng.

Chen Changsheng's clothes were riddled with tiny holes, just like a leaf that had been snacked on by a worm. The clothes floated in the rain and his face was deathly pale, but his two legs were still on the firm stone. The surrounding stone was covered with a spider web of cracks, and he seemed somewhat miserable.

However, he did not retreat a single step.

The powerful Demon General had retreated. He had been directly pushed a bit more than a hundred zhang away and heavily fell amidst the rain. He incessantly spat out blood and the iron staff in his hands had been bent to a ridiculous extent.

The rain continued to fall like thunder, but upon the divine path, there was a deathly stillness.

# Chapter 328 - Mountain Sea Sword

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The torrential rain continued to fall. Teng Xiaoming stood up with great difficulty and wiped away the blood from the corner of his lips. He looked at the metal sword in Chen Changsheng's hand and was shocked speechless. He thought, just what sword is that to actually possess such terrifying weight, such thunder-like power, and such an unimaginably thick sword intent? Where did the metal sword come from? Why did it appear before the mausoleum?

Chen Changsheng knew the metal sword came from the Sword Pool, but he did not know of its exact location despite having known of its existence inside the grassland of pouring, torrential rain. At the same time, he came to know of the metal sword's history the moment he grabbed ahold of it.

In the history of the path of the sword, this metal sword had widespread renown. It was called the Mountain Sea Sword.

Countless years ago, the Heavenly Tomes transformed into countless meteors and descended in rolling flames, falling into the centre of the continent, and formed the current-day Mausoleum of Books. Other than the stone monoliths, there were also countless pieces of meteorite shrapnel. People of the past collected the meteorite shrapnel and used all methods at their disposal to smelt it. In the end, they smelted meteorite metal, which was also known as the True Metal of Meteorites. The meteorite metal was different from the metals on the continent. It was extremely heavy, extremely dense, extremely strong, and extremely tough; it could be said to be the best material for forging swords. Actually, most of the meteorite metal of the continent was used to make a single sword.

This was also the black and heavy metal sword currently in Chen Changsheng's hand.

It was heavy like a mountain and mighty like the sea, so it was given the name Mountain Sea Sword.

The metal pole in Teng Xiaoming's hand only contained two taels of the True Metal of Meteorites, and already it was as heavy as a mountain. Besides, the entire sword was made out of meteorite metal, so just how heavy and just how terrifying was it?

The Mountain Sea Sword was very well known in history. No matter in the battlefield or outside the Tong Palace, the sword and its appointed successors acted out scenes of partings and reunions as magnificent as life and death. Before the metal sword, it was not known how many experts and famous people had been crushed. However, the person who really made the Mountain Sea Sword seem the most splendid was its last recorded owner.

Thousands of years ago, an expert called Xike appeared. He carried the bloodline of the White Emperor and was said to cultivate the methods of the long extinct Buddhism. Coupled with his innate divine strength, just by power and bearing, he could be ranked within the top three in all of history. When he lifted the heavy metal sword, he could even fight armies numbering in the tens of thousands.

Only such an expert had the qualifications to use the Mountain Sea Sword and to display the entirety of its power. Furthermore,

only the Mountain Sea Sword could match up to such a peerless expert. No one knew whether it was Xike who had allowed the Mountain Sea Sword to gain its ageless fame of fighting prowess or if it was the Mountain Sea Sword that had allowed him to create countless storms on the continent in his time. In short, the metal sword and a matching expert in unison gave rise to a legend of countless victories.

Xike carried the Mountain Sea Sword and consecutively defeated the experts of the continent. The Head Instructor of the Scholartree Manor and the Grand Elder of the Longevity Sect of that time were all people vanquished by him. He was tyrannical without equal, and some people even believed he had already entered the Saint Realm. In the end... just like many peerless experts before him, he entered the Garden of Zhou full of arrogance and ultimately left it in a downhearted state as though he had lost his soul. The Mountain Sea Sword never appeared by his side again. Afterwards, after three years, in a very random conflict in the Yunyang City, he died at the hands of a junior who had just begun to rise in fame...

This question seemed to have finally reached an answer. Without the Mountain Sea Sword, he was just an ordinary expert. However, the Pope had a completely different perspective on this. He believed above all that the most important thing Xike had lost, after being bested in melee against Zhou Dufu, was not the sword but his proud and overbearing heart of the sword.

This was the Mountain Sea Sword. If it was placed among a pile of the ten most famous swords in the world, regardless of who it was, they would all definitely choose this metal sword. The Mountain Sea Sword was made out of the most valuable meteorite

metal and had required the longest time to forge, so it was the most valuable. No matter who was in possession of this metal sword, they would all become so excited that they were unable to control themselves, unable to believe their own luck. Chen Changsheng was also beside himself with joy. He thought that if he could bring this metal sword out of the Garden of Zhou, it was the most suitable in Xuanyuan Po's hands. Also, Zhexiu had always said that he wanted a sword, so shouldn't he also get a sword for him?

Only at this moment did he realise that, originally, the upper part of the metal sword was not naturally straight. The rumor that the Mountain Sea Sword was definitely edgeless was wrong. Speaking of which, such a divine weapon definitely had an edge hidden to its bluntness, but it was chopped off... just what blade chopped it off? To actually be able to chop off a part of the Mountain Sea Sword, just how powerful was the blade? And just how powerful was the person?

The Mountain Sea Sword had already disappeared from the world for almost a thousand years, leaving behind nothing but hearsay and myths. That was also why Teng Xiaoming was unable to recognise it from the onset. However, after looking at it a few times, and thinking about the huge power that was like a mountain and boundless as the sea exuding from the metal sword, he very naturally guessed the origin of the metal sword. As a result, he was even more shocked. He did not say anything and only slightly furrowed his brows. It was unknown what he was thinking about.

Nanke also recognised the origin of the metal sword. Her clear voice pierced through the curtain of rain, and she spoke with a voice that was filled with anger and confusion, "This is impossible,

why would the Mountain Sea Sword appear for you?!"

Chen Changsheng did not say anything. He lifted the metal sword and pointed it at her from far away, through the wind and rain. Actions were much more powerful than words. If the Mountain Sea blade did not appear for him, why was it currently in his hands?

"Also, you don't understand the Mountain Sea Sword's sword style at all! Just why are you able to use it to such a great extent?" Nanke asked a very important question. Just as how it was before, even if the Mountain Sea Blade had retained its sword intent, without the matching sword style and considering Chen Changsheng's cultivation level of upper level Ethereal Opening, just how could he defeat a Demon General so easily and effortlessly?

Chen Changsheng did not hide anything and said to her, "I have read relatively many books."

This was what Gou Hanshi had said to him at the Ivy Festival the year before, and also what he had said to Gou Hanshi. Also, only he and Gou Hanshi had the right to say that to each other. Anyone else could not, because nobody had read more books than he and Gou Hanshi.

In the three thousand scriptures of the Daoist Canon, stars were connected to everything. There were beautiful colors like jade, as well as thousands of methods. These methods were the gate to enlightenment.

After saying that, Chen Changsheng suddenly began to feel that he rather missed the Ivy Festival, missed the capital, and missed the Orthodox Academy. The disputes during those times were all disputes over will and spirit. It was not related to life and death. It did not separate humans and demons. It did not have shameless assassinations, ambushes, and betrayal. Thinking of it now, he could not help but find the disputes to be ridiculous, but they were also cute. Compared to the bloody scenes in the Garden of Zhou, how could he not miss those times?

The surroundings of the mausoleum fell silent again. It was because the legendary Mountain Sea Sword had appeared, because Chen Changsheng actually knew how to use the Mountain Sea Sword, and most importantly, because it was not sword intent but a real sword. Not many people knew that a sword had also appeared in the Garden of Zhou once before, which was then taken away by Su Li. To Nanke and the other demon experts, the metal sword that Chen Changsheng held was the first sword to appear in the Garden of Zhou. What did this mean? This was unprecedented, and the unprecedented often came along with the sound of thunder and great changes.

Just where did this heavy, black, metal sword appear from? Did its appearance out of nowhere mean the Sword Pool was also about to appear? Would those legendary famous swords also appear soon after? What made Nanke most confused, or even angry, was that she did not understand why the Sword Pool wanted to help Chen Changsheng. She looked at the dusky plains that surrounded the mausoleum. She let the rain wash down her pale small face and looked on for a very long time with her eyes squinted. However, she still could not find any clues to the Sword Pool. This caused her to grow more and more silent.

“Will there still be more swords that appear? Will those swords continue to help you? Just like the peerless sword intent and overbearing metal sword? Even if they do, do you know all the sword styles? I don’t believe it.”

Nanke thought about these matters and then extended her two hands towards the torrential rain.

With her action, the complexion of the two maids that always stood behind her in the rain suddenly turned pale. Especially in Hua Cui’s charming eyes was revealed an extreme pain, which was followed by blood spraying from her mouth.

Nanke’s petite body trembled slightly, as if she was about to keel over in the rain, but in the end, she did not. An extremely cold Qi exuded from her body and mixed with the trail of blood that Hua Cui had spat out.

Hua Cui’s blood was green.

The trail of green blood was not diluted by the torrential rain. After it mixed with Nanke’s cold Qi, it instead became more concentrated. It was extremely demonic. When it was about to be concentrated, the edges vaguely moved up and down.

That was a Peacock Plume.

With a whoosh, the Peacock Plume that at the same time seemed

fake and real pierced through countless curtains of heavy rain and shot towards him.

The Peacock Plume contained Nanke's true blood and burnt with flame as it came into contact with the rain. It burnt fiercely along the way, and even the heavy rain could not weaken the flames by a little. Instead, it caused the flames to become more and more berserk.

Since escaping into the grassland, Chen Changsheng had treated Xu Yourong along the way, so he understood extremely well the terrifying aspects of the Peacock Plume. He did not know whether the Yellow Paper Umbrella could receive the burning of the peacock true blood, and as for the poisons in the peacock true blood, it caused even him to be fully alert.

He could not help but admit that Nanke's will in battle and resolution were formidable to a terrifying degree, far exceeding the maturity and grimness of those of the same age. She did not hesitate to waste her most valuable true blood to counter Chen Changsheng's sword and umbrella. The strength of the heavy, black metal sword was without equal, and it was overbearing like a mountain and the sea. However, it lost its flexibility in some situations, especially in Chen Changsheng's hands. The Yellow Paper Umbrella became even swifter and more powerful with the sword intent, but it was unable to chop things like poisons and true blood into fragments. Chen Changsheng did not really care if he was poisoned, but he did not want to come in contact with even a sliver of the poisonous blood. In the blink of an eye, he thought through countless methods on how he could use the sword, the dagger, and the umbrella in response to the Peacock Plume, but he discovered that there were no methods that were perfect.

However, if he had that sword, perhaps he could overcome this hurdle.

When he thought of that idea, even he felt that it was very absurd, because it was too unbelievable, too extravagant, and too unreasonable. Just why could he get whatever he thought of? He also did not know where the sword was. Even if it was in the Garden of Zhou, why... just why? Previously, when he needed a sword intent, the sword intent arrived in his body. Just when he needed a heavy sword, the world's heaviest Mountain Sea Sword arrived before him in the rain, waiting for him to extend his hand to grab it. Now, when he needed that one sword the most, then perhaps... would it appear?

# Chapter 329 - Old Swords And The Teenager (Part One)

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The sword Chen Changsheng wanted naturally was in the Garden of Zhou, or more accurately, in the Sword Pool. Although he did not know where the sword he wanted was even now, it was without question a sword of equal renown to the Mountain Sea Sword currently in his hand.

Actually, the sword he wanted had a ranking on the Tier of Legendary Weapons far below the Mountain Sea Sword. However, in some aspects, its fame eclipsed the Mountain Sea Sword because it was rarely seen and was a sword that had been brought into the Garden of Zhou by Zhou Dufu himself. What was even more important was that the sword was the temple sword of the South Stream Temple. In other words, it was the Holy Maiden Sword.

Chen Changsheng did not know that the girl behind him was Xu Yourong. Even until now, he still did not have any favorable impressions of that name. At this moment, he naturally did not want the sword to be used as the dowry for his fiancée. On the contrary, as is spoken in the legends, the temple sword of South Stream Temple possessed sacred light that could purge all poisons and had a natural ability of suppressing the blood arts of the demons.

This thought indeed was very absurd, but it turned into reality. Right when he thought of the idea, in a certain area in the plains directly south of the mausoleum, an extremely fresh and clean feeling appeared. The wild grasses that were bent in the rain and seemed extremely tired straightened up again. Droplets of rain slid

down the veins of the blades of grass, and they seemed to be extremely exuberant.

An extremely soft sword intent appeared in the vitality of the countless grasses and subsequently suddenly disappeared without a trace.

In the next moment, the sword intent arrived at the stone platform in front of the mausoleum, and at the same time, a sword appeared. The sword seemed very simple and neat, without any additional decorations. It gave off a faint, sacred feeling, causing the gloominess that was cast upon the world by the rain to be illuminated by a lot.

This was the temple sword that Chen Changsheng wanted.

He extended his hand to grab the temple sword in the rain and proceeded to swing it at the incoming Peacock Plume.

Only an angry cry of a peacock could be heard from the violent flames. Afterwards, with a swish, the flames on the surface of the Peacock Plume turned into green smoke. The terrifying toxins in the blood flames were immediately and completely purified by the sacred light that was emitted by the temple sword.

Silence. Absolute Silence. Nanke's small face grew even paler. Her two maids behind her gazed at it wide-eyed, their faces rife with disbelief. The zither-playing old man revealed a terrified expression in his gaze, and Teng Xiaoming's expression turned exceedingly solemn.

Suddenly, the sound of rain stopped. Liu Wan'er, who had not yet acted, ran over at great speed along the divine path. The huge metal pot in her hand transformed into the whole night sky and fast approached the temple sword radiating sacred light from all sides.

Chen Changsheng let go of the hilt of the temple sword and grabbed the hilt of the Mountain Sea Sword in the rain once again. He flicked it upwards at the metal pot. With a metallic bang, Qi sprayed out violently and the black pot was flung directly into the air. A hole appeared in the night.

Behind the night was not the blue sky, but rather Liu Wan'er's two hands.

She held a wire with her two hands. It was extremely soft and flexible and wrapped itself around the Mountain Sea Sword, actually immobilizing the heavy metal sword. Then, at that moment, Teng Xiaoming, who was mentally connected to her, grabbed the metal pole. It fell from the rainy sky once again, smashing towards his head.

Simultaneously with all that, there was another abnormal disturbance in the depths of the grassland. A sword that was thin like a ray of light traversed the several dozens of li of torrential rain and arrived in front of the main gate of the mausoleum. It was as if it shoved itself into Chen Changsheng's right hand, which had just let go of the hilt of the Mountain Sea Sword.

The sword was so thin as to be graceful, making people feel that it was just like a needle.

Chen Changsheng grasped the sword and thrust it towards Liu Wan'er. The graceful body of the sword constantly shook as if it struggled to bear with the baptism of the torrential rain. The edge of the blade travelled like lightning, as if it was sewing something in the rain. He did not know what sword it was, so he did not know what sword style he used. He only felt that it was extremely soft, and the sword move was like all the colors of spring, a grand view that was very beautiful.

In the swishing sounds, the graceful sword did not sew a beautiful image in the rain, but instead cut the wire that trapped the Mountain Sea Sword. The graceful sword continued to pierce through the rain, arriving before Liu Wan'er in the end. It pierced her earlobe. If Teng Xiaoming's deformed metal pole did not come smashing down, perhaps the graceful sword would have directly pierced Liu Wan'er's neck.

The metal pole rushed through the air. Chen Changsheng released the graceful sword and grabbed the Mountain Sea Sword in the rain again, lifting it upwards. It was still flicking upwards, and there was only an earsplitting sound of collision. The metal pole whistled through the air, landing somewhere unknown. Teng Xiaoming unhesitantly grabbed Liu Wan'er's shoulder and retreated violently. They dangerously avoided Chen Changsheng's next strike.

No matter whether it was the graceful sword or the Mountain Sea Sword, for three consecutive strikes, Chen Changsheng used

flicking motions, from picking the thread from the cloth to raising a lamp in the night. He picked very cleanly and nimbly, and he raised very unrestrainedly.

(TL: The text is using the Chinese word 挑 as a theme for the three attacks. Basically, that includes picking, as in picking out a thread, raising, as in raising a lamp and flicking, which is the motion of the sword.)

The three swords were suspended quietly in the surrounding rain, depicting a scene of halting beauty.

Looking at the temple sword that radiated soft sacred light, Nanke was no longer able to suppress the shock in her heart. She was not even willing to wonder why the legendary Holy Maiden Sword had appeared and said angrily, “Why do you also know the sword style of the South Stream Temple?”

“Perhaps that is the Yue Maiden Sword?” Liu Wan’er looked at the graceful sword that was beside him in the rain, feeling deeply shocked. She did not even realise that a drop of dark red blood oozed out of her earlobe.

In the south-eastern corner of the continent, there once was a great sword sect. Many of the disciples in the sect were female, and it was in the Land of Yue, so it was called the Yue Maiden Sect. It produced many experts in the path of the sword, and until several centuries ago, it was equal to the South Stream Temple before slowly dwindling into obscurity. As for the South Stream Temple, even less needed to be discussed. It was the holy land of the southern religion and received the faith and worship of countless civilians.

Nanke and Liu Wan'er were naturally shocked by the appearance of the two swords. What they did not understand even more was why Chen Changsheng even knew the sword styles of the South Stream Temple and the Yue Maiden Sect. It must be known that these two sword styles focused on sacred purification and very sensitive concepts. There were very few males who would practice it.

Chen Changsheng did not explain. He was without a doubt able to grasp the sword styles of the South Stream Temple and the Yue Maiden Sect, at least grasping most of the moves and sword forms of the styles. Other than, him having memorized the Daoist Canon, the most important reason was that he was hard-working. When he came to the capital from Xining Village, in that first year of his time in the Orthodox Academy the things he did the most were reading, cultivating and studying all of the ways to cultivate on the path to enlightenment. Other than the teenagers in the Divine State's Seven Laws of the Mount Li Sword Sect, it was impossible to find another person who was as hard-working as him amongst his peers.

Looking at Chen Changsheng, who stood tall on the stone platform in the wind and rain, no matter if it was Nanke or Liu Wan'er, they all felt extremely uneasy.

Within the demon experts that had entered the Garden of Zhou, Teng Xiaoming was the quietest. Speaking of status, he was the twenty-fourth Demon General. Not to mention the fact that he was not even above Nanke, he was not even as great as his wife, but all of the aristocratic clans in Xuelao City knew that it was because he loved his wife. In terms of true battle prowess and insight, he was

the strongest one present.

As a result, he did not let the shocking scene before his eyes disturb his own emotions. He extended his hand towards a certain area to recall his metal pole. Creating ripples on the divine path with his feet, he attacked Chen Changsheng once again with the whistling wind.

The other experts also came back to their senses. They knew they could not let the battle continue to develop like so. They had just seen Chen Changsheng, who was just about to enter desperate straits, suddenly gain the support of three divine swords! Just who knew what would happen next?

Loud sounds reverberated consecutively, and the wind on the divine path blew powerfully. The torrential rain was blown diagonally like a weak willow. An extremely clear sound of a zither attacked towards Chen Changsheng who was on the side of the stone platform along with the powerful gusts of wind, carrying with it an unconcealed killing intent.

Just at this moment, a clear sound resonated in the rainy sky. It was the resonance of a sword, which was extremely sharp, able to resound through the world. It was also abnormally deep, like the ancient roar of a dragon.

The shadow of the great peng in the faraway sky slowly drooped. Suddenly, it was paused by the dragon roar for a while.

The complexion of the zither-playing old man was pale. His

fingers that stroked the zither string began to tremble violently, and with several snaps, the zither string broke. He spat out a mouthful of fresh blood, and the zither on his knees was immediately dyed red.

Just exactly what was it that gave off the roaring resonance, which was actually so mighty?

Just at this moment, a sword pierced through the rainy sky and arrived before Chen Changsheng.

The sword intent was extremely proud and overbearing without equal.

“Dragoncry Sword!” Liu Wan’er exclaimed in surprise.

Chen Changsheng grabbed the Dragoncry Sword from the rainy sky and swung it towards Teng Xiaoming.

The mausoleum suddenly began to glow, as if a phantom dragon had burst out of the sword. It heavily struck Teng Xiaoming’s abdomen, and leaving behind only a terrifying, muffled sound,, Teng Xiaoming was knocked flying for hundreds of zhang beneath the divine path. It was unknown in how many places his sternum had broken.

Nanke approached, and the true blood burned violently in her eyes.

Chen Changsheng looked into her eyes and suddenly released the hilt of the Dragoncry Sword. He extended his hand into the rainy air again.

Another extremely bright sword flew in from far away, landing in his hand.

He grabbed the sword and advanced forwards. The surface of the blade had the semblance of water, directly chopping at Nanke.

There was another exclamation of surprise on the Divine Path, “Autumn Water Sword!”

This was not the end.

This was only the beginning.

The sounds of swords piercing through the rain constantly resounded.

Shocked voices constantly exclaimed aloud.

“Jade Lake Sword!”

“Ten Feet Eight God Sword!”

“How is this possible, that is... the Demon Commander’s Banner

Sword!"

# Chapter 330 - Old Swords And The Teenager (Part Two)

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Swords flew out from all over the grassland without end and arrived in the rainy sky before the mausoleum.

Over ten swords floated around Chen Changsheng.

Countless Qis arrived in an earth-shaking manner. However, no matter if it was Teng Xiaoming's overbearing demon techniques or Nanke's burning true blood, he only needed to extend his hand and grasp a sword, breaking everything in his way with a swing.

Hua Cui and Ning Qiu looked at this scene. Their faces were pale, and they felt their two legs go slightly soft, nearly rendered unable to stand anymore.

Some of the swords were long and some were short. Some were wide and some were thin. Some were very overbearing, and some were very low-profile. Some glowed with sacred light, and some emanated demonic Qi. However, they all had one special aspect. These swords... were all very well known.

The Mountain Sea Sword, the Holy Maiden Sword; the Yue Maiden Sword, the Autumn Water Sword; the Jade Lake Sword, the Ten Feet Eight God Sword; the Demon Commander's Banner Sword, the Dragoncry Sword... after hundreds of years, these exceptional, well-renowned swords that had disappeared for a very long time finally appeared for all to see once again.

At present, the swords hovered silently in the rain.

Chen Changsheng stood in the rain, surrounded by the swords.

In the end, time was still the greatest magical artifact. The swords that were once renowned had already fallen into a horrible condition. The one maintained the best was the temple sword of the South Stream Temple followed by the Mountain Sea Sword. The remaining swords were more or less in a rather dreadful state. Some of the swords had the soil of the grassland on them. When the soil was slowly washed away by the rain, it revealed rust marks. They were no longer as elegant as they were before, causing people to feel sorrow.

However, in the torrential rain, the swords still exuded their cold, proud Qi.

Nanke was unable to understand and even more-so unable to accept it. Just why would these exceptional swords that were once proud without equal obey Chen Changsheng's will? No matter how she thought about it, she was unable to find an answer. Chen Changsheng did not even know himself. He only knew that the once exceptional swords wanted to leave the Garden of Zhou. However, for the past centuries, there were many human and demon cultivators that had entered the Plains of the Unsetting Sun, so just why did these swords choose him?

The most important reason was the sword intent currently in the Yellow Paper Umbrella.

The sword intent separated from the body of the sword hundreds of years ago, and from that day onwards, it became the only sword spirit that had freedom. It represented the renowned swords that were unable to leave the Sword Pool and released its Qi to the outside of the plains incessantly.

Chen Changsheng held the Yellow Paper Umbrella, so he could clearly feel the sword intent.

When he let the sword intent enter the Yellow Paper Umbrella, it meant the return of an old friend that had once left the Sword Pool. He proved his capacity to the proud, renowned swords. However, this was not enough. These swords were already unused for many years, and their great ambitions had already slowly dwindled away. If they did not have enough certainty in leaving, they would have rather continued to sleep at the bottom of the Sword Pool. At least, they could last for slightly longer, otherwise, if they rose vigorously on their remaining sword intent for a battle and did not succeed, it was extremely possible for the sword to break and their intent to perish.

Chen Changsheng needed to prove that he had enough perseverance and power to take them out of the Garden of Zhou.

The former was not a problem. He was a teenager in the middle of his youth, and his eyes were full of the thirst for freedom and life. Originally, the latter was a great problem, but when the Black Dragon's spiritual soul began to sleep in his body, it was no longer an issue.

The jade ruyi that held the Black Dragon's spiritual soul was currently tied to his wrist, glistening as the rain washed over its surface. It grew brighter and brighter.

The jade ruyi was a magical artifact that the Tianhai Divine Empress carried by her side, so it possessed her powerful Qi.

Chen Changsheng's perseverance and kindness, as well as this powerful Qi, were spread widely across the entire grassland through the sword intent and the Yellow Paper Umbrella like a signal. Although the exceptional, renowned swords were in a horrible condition, their sword intent still remained. They had seen countless experts with their masters, and they had seen and experienced an unimaginable amount of things. However, when they felt the powerful Qi from the jade ruyi, they were all startled to their core. Even if Zhou Dufu was still alive, the owner of this powerful Qi could still take them out of the Garden of Zhou. Why would they not oblige at this point?

As a result, they travelled through the rain and wind and arrived by Chen Changsheng's side.

However, where exactly were these swords located previously? Just where was the Sword Pool?

The rain that pelted the old and renowned swords also ran down Nanke's small face in rivulets.

Her face turned paler and paler and took on a snow-like hue akin to the temple sword. The flames in her eyes were slowly

extinguished, but there still was no fear to be seen—her shock and anger were an interplay of her respect to the histories these swords represented and her disdain for Chen Changsheng. Moreover, the interaction between the two made her feel mortified, which led to a strong emotional response and nothing more.

Looking at the dozen or so swords that floated silently by Chen Changsheng in the rainy sky, she stayed silent for a while and then said, “You all were once the defeated by the Halving Blade. Perhaps you want to revolt today?”

The swords could not understand what she said and continued to float silently in the rain. Cold rain dripped from the miserable broken edge of the Demon Commander’s Banner Sword, falling onto the flat portion of the upper half of the Mountain Sea Sword. It did not respond to her.

Nanke raised the Soul Wood in her hand. The color of the Soul Wood after being wet by the rain took on a darker shade by the minute.

The monster tide surrounding the mausoleum had been growing restless for a long time already, and at this moment, in the aftermath of her action, it slipped further into its berserk state. Countless mournful cries from the monsters resounded, traveling up from the surface of the grassland into the the curtain of rain like a shockwave.

She did not want to do it like this, but Chen Changsheng and those swords forced her hand. At that moment, she could not care anymore, even if the Mausoleum of Zhou would be contaminated

by countless inferior monsters.

The Soul Wood suddenly began to glow brightly.

With the countless, terrifying roars of anger, a veritable host of waves began to rise from the black ocean that comprised the monster tide. The grassland began to tremble, soon including the mausoleum. Doves of monsters began to launch their attacks.

Nanke looked at him and yelled, “Chen Changsheng, do you think that you can rely on some old, broken swords to survive?”

Chen Changsheng looked on at the endless monster sea surrounding the mausoleum and said nothing.

Not far behind him, Xu Yourong leaned on the main entrance of the mausoleum. She hugged the Tong Bow and was wrapped in sackcloth. Her eyes were closed, and it was unknown as to when she would wake up again.

# Chapter 331 - Old Swords And The Teenager (Part Three)

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When that sword intent had first appeared, and when the metal sword had come to Chen Changsheng's side, the ocean of monsters surrounding the mausoleum had responded. Whether it was with fear or anger, they had grown restless, albeit suppressed by Nanke shortly after. Now, along with the dazzling radiance of the Soul Wood, this restriction suddenly disappeared. The myriad monsters in the plains could no longer endure. One by one, they began to madly rush towards the mausoleum. The earth shook for a moment, and then the torrential downpour that fell from the gloomy lightless sky seemed to carry a bloody and foul smell.

Only that dreadful shadow maintained its silence. Although it had descended slightly, it neither revealed its divine might nor acted upon this impetus. Perhaps because of the great peng's actions, the high-class monsters deep within the plains at the peak of Star Condensation had not joined the monster tide in surrounding the mausoleum. It was not that they were opposing the summons of the Soul Wood, nor were they resisting Nanke's will, but it was simply that they were highly intelligent and could faintly sense that something very serious lay in store, growing extremely wary as a result. Of course, this serious matter had something to do with the Garden of Zhou.

Countless monsters transformed into black waves that, one after the other, rushed towards the mausoleum. The sky above the usually silent Plains of the Unsetting Sun had long turned into an unbearable cacophony. The pools of water beneath the weeds parted as they were sliced into countless pieces by sharp monster claws, subsequently crushed flat by scaly stomachs. The mud was

constantly sent flying, and the clear water turned incomparably turbid. Such grandeur and forcefulness was truly terrifying to behold. Just as was said before, even if a Saint was present, they would still be unable to completely kill off that unending stream of monsters rushing towards the mausoleum. They could only escape. As Chen Changsheng stood in the downpour and saw this scene, he naturally wanted to run away, but he had no avenue of escape from them.

Around his body, a bit more than ten famous swords calmly floated around him in the rain. These swords had caused a great many changes in the human world, yet now they were subject to the same such change, marked by spots of intermittent rust on their bodies of metal. When they first emerged, they did so with great fanfare and astounding power, but in the end, they could no longer recover their past grandeur and magnificence. Crucially, those peerless experts who once wielded these swords had passed away long ago.

With just these swords, it was impossible to oppose the attacks of these monsters. If he wanted to become an unyielding boulder in the face of this ocean, he required even more swords.

Through those heavy curtains of rain, Chen Changsheng's gaze looked all around him to the plains around the mausoleum, examining that terrifying monster tide while unyieldingly searching for even more swords. Those swords should be in the Sword Pool. For some reason or another, they did not appear like the Mountain Sea Sword. They were still waiting for his summons, or perhaps they wanted to be persuaded. However, where was the Sword Pool?

"If you are here, please come out and approach me, because I need you."

These were his thoughts, which he imbued into the handle of the trembling Yellow Paper Umbrella. Through the canvas of the umbrella, it spread out towards that boundless plain.

He looked at the distant plains that were dreary and blurred from the rain; then he looked at the nearby groaning plains that had been diced apart by the monster claws and crushed flat by the dragon serpents. In his heart, he silently called out to the Sword Pool somewhere out there, "I will take you out of this abandoned old garden. Perhaps you might continue to sleep, but at least... it won't be in these plains in which there is never night and in which you can never sleep peacefully."

The monster tide grew closer and closer. They were already on the divine path in front of the mausoleum, only several li away. Standing at the edge of the stone platform, Chen Changsheng could even clearly make out that foremost Purple Lightning Leopard's blood-red mouth and the saliva dripping from the corner of its lips, catching a whiff of the stink being emitted by that saliva.

At this moment, he abruptly felt a vibration.

This vibration had nothing to do with the monster tide, nor anything to do with the torrential rain.

This vibration came from deep within the sea of grass. It was deep within the earth, extremely subtle and somewhat weak, yet it

was just that clear.

The Purple Lightning Leopard was like a real bolt of purple lightning, breaking through the dense grass and lunging at the mausoleum. Its blood-red eyes were filled with a bloodthirsty, frenzied Qi.

Suddenly, a hint of wariness appeared in its eyes, and then they split open.

Soon after, the corner of its mouth also split open, its dripping saliva mixing with the blood and turning the area into a smear of bloody red.

It sensed danger and madly increased its speed, attempting to escape that vibration.

The vibration was truly very feeble. Its movement through the earth seemed unhurried.

Yet the bolt of lightning that was the Purple Lightning Leopard could not throw off that vibration.

In the falling rain, there was a light tearing sound.

Rip!

The Purple Lightning Leopard's body was torn into pieces,

turning into more than a dozen bloody chunks, splitting apart as it ran. Yet each chunk still maintained velocity, falling to the ground only after several dozen zhang.

This picture was extremely strange and terrifying.

In a pawprint left behind by the Purple Lightning Leopard, the soft mud was incessantly roiling. A sword slowly appeared.

This was only half a sword, its hilt deeply scored with rust, the half-blade covered in mud. It presented an extremely miserable sight, not much different from a piece of scrap metal.

This half blade calmly rested amidst the mud and stirred up the grass.

The rain continued to fall. In the shower of rain, the mud on the sword's body was slowly washed off, but it could not wipe away the rust. It remained as drab as ever without a single semblance of a shining edge. Yet it was still a little cleaner in the end. This half sword incessantly trembled, struggling, attempting to leave the ground... it was like a heavily wounded soldier supported by crutches that still wanted to stand up once more and slay the enemy.

After some time, the broken sword took off from the ground and crookedly flew towards the mausoleum. It seemed like it could fall back to the ground at any time.

In the Plains of the Unsetting Sun, the monster with a speed that was only second to the Purple Lightning Leopard was the Wind Wolf. These monsters were born from a cross between the wolf packs of the snowy plains and the Demon Wolves of the Great Western Continent. They innately possessed an unimaginable speed. It was said that they were the only monsters capable of successfully catching a Red Falcon. Of course, this was mostly attributable to the collective battle power and persevering patience of the Wind Wolves.

The bizarre death of the Purple Lightning Leopard in front of them did not cause that pack of Wind Wolves to slow down in the slightest. As the most devoted and most bloodthirsty guardian of the Mausoleum of Zhou, when the head of the pack received the orders from the Soul Wood, it wanted to rip to shreds those intruders that had dared to enter the mausoleum. Most importantly, even if several of the Wind Wolves that made up this pack of several hundred were to fall at the hands of that shabby sword, there would always be more Wind Wolves ready to rush on over and assault the enemy.

The wolf pack was extremely intelligent in terms of hunting. Previously, when they had been waiting, the head of the pack had taken his subordinates and noiselessly pushed through the crowd of monsters, arriving on the White Grass Path. This was because the ground here was the firmest and the distance to the mausoleum's front door was closest. It was the ground best suited for charging.

The cold white grass on the White Grass Path was smashed to bits and the wolf pack plunged across like the wind. Because their speed was too fast and their numbers too great, they brought with

them an ear-piercing whistle. Yet in the next moment, that wind-shattering whistle was supplanted by another wind-shattering sound. That sound was even more shrill, or so to say, even more sharp.

That was the sound of sword intent tearing through the air.

The strand of white hair at the tip of the Wind Wolf pack leader's head was severed by the wind.

This strand of white hair was the defining characteristic of the Wind Wolves that separated them from all other wolves. It was also this strand of white hair that contained the divine soul of the Wind Wolf, allowing them to travel with the speed of the wind.

Now, this white hair had been severed.

The Wind Wolf pack leader gave a furious and unwilling howl, but before this howl had completely come out of its mouth, it stopped, as if it had been cut down by a sword.

Countless cracks appeared on the White Grass Path, each of them parallel to the direction of the mausoleum. They were like countless straight lines obstructing the charge of the Wind Wolves.

As long as a Wind Wolf crossed one of these straight lines, they would be sliced open by an unseen force.

The wolf claws that treaded on the firm ground were severed.

The wolf shoulders that carried bits of white grass were severed.

The wolf tail was severed, and the wolf waist was severed.

The several hundred Wind Wolves that made up the wolf pack, in the instant those cracks appeared, were all severed.

As if someone had dumped a big basket of rocks on the floor, the White Grass path resounded with rumbling and tumbling.

The countless corpses of the Wind Wolves were chopped into chunks and rolled around the White Grass Path. Some of them rolled right off into the pools of water by the side of the path, while others were chopped into an even finer powder by the sword intent.

The path to the mausoleum was filled with severed limbs and dissected corpses. Filthy blood spurted all over the place, turning the White Grass Path into a bloody path. The scent of blood assaulted the nostrils to the extreme.

As the scent of blood drifted into the sky, those cracks of sword intent also went against the rain and soared up into the sky.

Several thousand demon vultures were flying high up in the sky in crafty silence. These monsters were powerful and sinister. At the beginning, even Xu Yourong had to burn up the last of her Heavenly Phoenix true blood to kill that flock of demon vultures.

Unlike the other monsters, they didn't crazily cry out, instead stealthily flying towards the mausoleum.

It seemed like all that separated them from the mausoleum was empty sky. There was nothing obstructing their path, making it all the easier to launch a sneak attack.

Yet those lines of sword intent had also arrived in the sky.

The cracks of the plain seemed as though they wanted to tear asunder the sky.

With a sudden burst of countless wretched cries, their severed wings slowly drifted down to the ground in equal quantity to the rain. What fell even faster down to the plains was their beautiful blood.

The several thousand demon vultures fell one by one. For a moment, they seemed to fall even more densely than the torrential rain.

Those countless monsters that charged the mausoleum were all chopped to pieces, turning into indistinct chunks of blood and flesh.

The surface of the plains was covered with countless cracks. The weeds were chopped into bits and the mud was chopped into tiny chunks. Countless lines of sword intent horizontally ascended upwards into the sky.

Even that rain cloud high up in the sky was sliced apart, transforming into countless puffs that could only float off in frustration.

The downpour, just like this, ended.

The setting sun that was not at all like a sun at the edge of the plains finally had the opportunity to spill its warm light onto the mausoleum.

Monster corpses were strewn across every inch of the ground. Occasionally, there would be a heavily injured monster that had not yet died, constantly giving off mournful and miserable cries in its death throes.

The monster tide that was initially rushing towards the mausoleum paused. They no longer dared to continue forward and slowly bobbed up and down.

This was a blood-red world.

The black monster tide was also gradually turning into a calm red sea.

After that mausoleum in the center of the monster tide had been soaked in the rain, its color had become extremely dark. Right now, it looked just like a black boulder in the middle of a red sea.

No matter how swift the wind and waves or how violent the rainstorm, it could not be moved in the slightest.

Compared to this blood-red world and the black mausoleum, the truly shocking scene could be found in the plains around the mausoleum.

A broken sword strenuously flew into the sky, brightly whistling.

An old sword broke through the water, carrying with it the sound of muddy water spattering off.

An ancient sword split through a rock, grinding against the stone.

Several dozen swords.

Several hundred swords.

Several thousand swords.

Perhaps strenuously, perhaps hesitantly, perhaps joyously breaking through the swamp and once again appearing in this world.

Countless swords appeared in the sky around the mausoleum.

These plains were covered with pools of water. It seemed very much like a wetland, or even a swamp.

For several hundred years, countless people had sought out the Sword Pool, yet none of them had found it. They had not even found the slightest clue on the Sword Pool.

Because no one had ever thought that the Sword Pool... was actually this big.

The Sword Pool was not a mountain pool, nor was it a cold pool.

Those swords had always been in these plains.

These boundless and incomparably vast plains themselves were the Sword Pool.

No, how could this be a pool? This was obviously a sea.

A Sword Sea.

The plains were deathly silent.

Chen Changsheng silently stood at the edge of the stone platform and gazed at this scene before him.

Previously, he had already faintly guessed at the Sword Pool's

true appearance, but now that he personally saw these myriad swords appear, he was still shocked to the extreme.

Nanke stood on the divine path and viewed this scene, her face expressionless as she thought about something. Ning Qiu held her mouth shut so that she would not give any cries of alarm while her companion Hua Cui had collapsed onto the wet ground. The zither-playing old man's face was exceptionally pale, the zither in front of him covered in blood. It seemed like he did not even dare to glance behind him.

Teng Xiaoming and Liu Wan'er withdrew their gazes and glanced into each other's eyes and saw each other's apology and determination.

No one said anything, and nobody moved.

Even that monster tide in the plains had also slowly calmed down.

Because those swords were flying towards the mausoleum.

Countless swords flew through the warm light of the sun, seeming to obscure the sky.

As they got close to the mausoleum, those countless swords that had been washed in the rain began to reflect a glorious light, making them seem like a sky full of stars.

This scene was truly very beautiful.

But those swords flew very slowly, not at all like just a few moments ago when they had burst forth with pride and power.

The innumerable swords flew towards the mausoleum and slowly dispersed, as if they were soldiers getting into formation.

The space between heaven and earth was filled with sword intent.

The sword intents were once incomparably strong, but they were now weak. When they interweaved with each other, it was somewhat chaotic.

The sword intents did not have intelligence, but they had emotions, each and every sort of complex emotion.

To this mausoleum, the sword intents were cold and aggressive.

To that youth standing on the mausoleum, it was like they were seeing an old friend, as though they were saying, he has called us to take us away from this place.

That blade had been very heartless in their time, but the passage of time was even more heartless.

Some swords had slept within the sea of grass for centuries and

had long been damaged to an irrevocable extent.

In the instant they were about to leave the plains, these swords had already exploded with their greatest power.

Yes, these swords were already old, covered in rust, and about to rot away.

These swords were heavily injured soldiers, elderly men who could only walk forward with walking sticks.

They should have long left the battlefield and returned to their fields. It was a pity that the fields here were no good, and this was not their home. It was just a cage.

For several hundred years, they had never thought about leaving these plains. Ultimately, one of their companions succeeded and carried with it their desires.

Yet this companion never returned.

Until today, just as those swords were about to lose all hope, their old friend had finally returned.

A youth had come back to these plains with their desires.

These swords were old, but this youth was in his spring.

Chen Changsheng's thirst for freedom, his adoration for life; it was so pure and resolute.

It was like a clear wind that stirred them awake.

They had heard his call, believed in his will, and thus heroically appeared once more.

An old sword still had some power, a broken edge could still kill the enemy.

Their will subsumed these thousand li.

They wanted to go further than those thousand li.

They wanted to go home.

# Chapter 332 - A Monster Like A Mountain

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Looking back over a thousand years ago, centuries before Zhou had disappeared, countless experts were defeated at his hands in those hundreds of years. Countless renowned swords were broken under his blade and were buried in this grassland in the Garden of Zhou. This grassland was the Sword Pool, or perhaps more-so the Sword Sea. The proudest and strongest blade within made preparations for a long time and subsequently began to attempt to leave this grassland to see the light again. It broke the restriction at the edge of the grassland and quickly entered the small lake nearby until it reached the world through the mountain range. It was like a fish swimming in a great lake and returned to the cold lake where the stream started by going through the bottom of it. It borrowed the complicated structure of the Garden of Zhou to avoid the rules within it and finally succeeded.

Unfortunately, the sword was unable to reach complete success. When it left the grassland, in order to resist against the restrictions that had been set down by Zhou Dufu, the sword intent remained in the grassland and fought against the Qi that exuded from the stone pillars. Only the body of the sword had arrived in the forest by the lake, which was then slowly covered up by fallen leaves.

The sword and the intent were separated.

One day, a Mount Li disciple called Su Li came to the Garden of Zhou. He walked into the quiet forest, and stepped past the rotting leaves. He lifted up the sword body that had already begun to rust and was no longer as it was before, and then he took it out of the Garden of Zhou. The sword intent was still trapped inside the grassland, waiting silently and alone. After another several

centuries, a student of the Orthodox Academy called Chen Changsheng came to the Garden of Zhou. He carried a Yellow Paper Umbrella in hand, and the sword and intent finally met again. Only because of that did the ten thousand swords soaring in the sky exist.

The histories full of unyielding resistance belonged to the sword and the ten thousand swords. Chen Changsheng was unable to understand the recollection, so he naturally was unable to understand these details. However, he held the Yellow Paper Umbrella and stood between the ten thousand broken swords and gained an even deeper understanding to the emotions given off by their sword intents.

The swords wanted to leave the Garden of Zhou. Other than that, they had no other requests.

Then, they should leave together.

Just as he had said to the sword intent before, and as he had said to Xu Yourong, at this moment, he made a promise to the countless swords surrounding the mausoleum.

It was dusk around the mausoleum. The red, warm light turned slightly cold, and there was the smell of dirt and rust everywhere. Ten thousand old swords in horrible conditions burst out with the hatred and power they had saved up for centuries as soon as they appeared, and at least a third of all the monster were killed. The black monster tide was thus temporarily suppressed.

However, the monster tide only grew silent temporarily. It was impossible for the ten thousand swords in horrible conditions to continue to release such a powerful sword intent. With the flow of time, the monster tide began to rush forth once again, giving angry howls at the swords in the sky. It was not known whether it was because of the blood on the grassland, but the howls seemed even more terrifying and bloody.

The Sword Pool finally appeared. Ten thousand swords floated high in the sky.

Looking at the scene, no matter if it was the zither-playing old man or the maids, they all paled and almost fell into despair. The powerful demon general couple also displayed an abnormally serious expression, and even some ominous signs could be seen in their eyes. Nanke's small face instead did not reveal any fear, and she only stayed silent for a while.

Through the countless swords, she looked at Chen Changsheng who stood before the main entrance of the mausoleum. Her voice was as cold and as hard as thousand-year-old ice, "Do you think you can change the ending of the story like this?"

Before, when the Mountain Sea Sword arrived through the air, she said something similar to Chen Changsheng. At that time, Chen Changsheng did not reply and only pointed at her from afar with the heavy metal sword. Concurrently, he also did not reply. With his gaze, the hundreds of sword directly in front of the mausoleum slowly turned to point at her.

Actions were always more powerful than words. They could be

used to persuade people, and they could also be used to kill people.

Looking at this scene, the corner of Nanke's lips curled slightly. Looking at the swords, she said in disdain, "A bunch of defeated swords—how can you try to act brave?"

These swords were swords that once had great reputations in the continent, and their owners were true experts. However, in the end, they still suffered defeat under the Halving Blade and were inevitably buried by Zhou Dufu in this grassland. They suffered under the wind, rain and the endless sun for hundreds of years. They were either broken or in a horrible condition, covered in intermittent stains of rust.

Nanke believed that she was the successor of the Garden of Zhou. How could she let these swords leave?

She raised the black Soul Wood in her hand and gazed at the swords in the surrounding sky of the mausoleum expressionlessly.

The black piece of Soul Wood suddenly began to glow brightly again in response to her action, except it was even more concentrated than before, reminiscent of a luminous pearl that began to shine thousands of times brighter. At the same time, her indifferent voice resounded once again, "Defeat is defeat. Centuries ago, you suffered defeat, and centuries later, you will still suffer defeat."

When her voice faded away, her feet left the divine path, and she slowly floated up into the sky.

The horrible rain fell. Her dress floated slightly, and her black hair danced in the air. The feeling of immaturity in her eyes slowly disappeared, and only a coldness that was rich in demonic malice remained. A powerful Qi dispersed into the surroundings from her small body. Dozens of black streams of air fluttered around her akin to ribbons.

Chen Changsheng had never underestimated this powerful, and even terrifying, Demon Princess. Not to mention the fact that she was the only disciple of Black Robe, it was obvious that she had some relationship with the Garden of Zhou, so who knew what other techniques she still had up her sleeve? Hearing her disdainful and confident words, he knew that he could not allow the situation to continue. With the slight control of his spiritual sense, a sword flew through the wind.

The heavy Mountain Sea Sword chopped towards Nanke, who was above the divine path, with a huge gust of wind.

The Teng Xiaoming and Liu Wan'er couple were already long prepared. Leaping up explosively, they forcefully blocked the sword with their powerful level of cultivation.

The Mountain Sea Sword was very wide and big. Behind it hid a graceful sword.

Between life and death, Chen Changsheng had also learnt such cold, crafty methods. The graceful Yue Maiden Sword borrowed the gust of wind created by the Mountain Sea Sword to hide in and

soundlessly broke through the obstructions of the Demon General couple. It arrived in front of Nanke, and with a soft swish, it was thrust towards her forehead.

At this moment, Nanke had already closed her eyes. Her forehead that seemed a little wide was snow white. She did not have any emotions and also did not see the arrival of the graceful sword.

The broken zither string made no sound and floated gently. The zither-playing old man, who seemed already be at the brink of death, yelled loudly, pushing off the floating zither string with his feet. He took a few strides in the air and arrived before Nanke. He used his own body to block the graceful sword. With a squelch, the graceful sword pierced through the throat of the zither-playing old man, fresh blood squirting out.

In the gust of wind, the metal sword that was heavy like a mountain suppressed the Demon General couple. The dead body of the old man fell towards the ground. Although he blocked the Yue Maiden Sword for a moment, Nanke still had not returned to her senses. How could Chen Changsheng lose such an opportunity? He extended his hand and grabbed the broken Demon Commander's Banner Sword. From a distance hundreds of zhang away, he chopped at Nanke.

Above the divine path, which the rain fell on, there was a sudden flapping wind susurrus, as if an invisible flag was floating in the wind.

The army banner flapped, and the sword intent burst forth. The Demon Commander's Banner Sword, which already had the front

portion broken, produced a bitter, cold sword ray.

Chen Changsheng did not know the banner sword style, but he wanted to try and see whether he could use the sword style of demons to break the defence of the demon princess. Unfortunately, he was unable to see the result of the strike, because he suddenly felt a sign of danger in the sea of consciousness. It made him forcefully pull back the Demon Commander's Banner Sword, holding it horizontally before his eyes.

Clang~!

The Demon Commander's Banner Sword that only had half of it remaining trembled violently in the air by the edge of the stone platform, producing a rather unwilling resonance.

Chen Changsheng felt a wave of great pain in his wrist. If it was not for his astonishing willpower, perhaps the Demon Commander's Banner Sword would have already left his hand.

Where did the arrow come from?

In the surroundings of the main entrance of the mausoleum in front of him, he did not see any arrows and only saw a fine strand of hair that floated gently above the divine path.

Was the thing the Demon Commander's Banner Sword had blocked not an arrow but rather a fine hair?

He gazed at the grassland below the mausoleum.

He only saw that in the centre of the black ocean formed by the monster tide, a monster with the semblance of a mountain slowly appeared.

# Chapter 333 - Ten Thousand Swords Form An Army

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As the Soul Wood in Nanke's hand glowed once more, that monster tide which had been somewhat pacified by the shocking appearance of those innumerable swords once again flew into a frenzy.

Yet that enormous figure standing in the depths of the monster tide remained as stable as a mountain.

It was a Monster Bull, the legendary Monster Bull.

The reason it was called 'legendary' was because, as recorded in the Daoist scriptures, tens of thousands of years ago, the humans and demons had paid an enormous price to render these monsters extinct. It was also because these monsters possessed an extraordinary strength, which had become its own sort of legend.

The Monster Bull possessed a fighting power similar to that of the upper level of Star Condensation. Although their souls had not been enlightened and they did not possess true intelligence, thus falling short of a human upper level Star Condensation expert, in the mountains and wastelands in which they lived, they were absolutely on par with those human upper level Star Condensation experts, and perhaps even more powerful than them in terms of destructive power. The reason for this was that the Monster Bull was the rarely seen type of monster that was skilled at long-range attacks.

The Monster Bull's body was as massive as a mountain, its surface covered with a natural layer of solid armor. The tip of its solitary horn could pierce through rock.

Its most special characteristic was also the one which spawned the most fear and unease. It was that slender tail on its behind, covered in black hair. When it was sitting down, its slender tail would curl up in a pile. When it encountered an enemy, or prey, the slender tail would straighten itself and then wrap itself around the horn at the top of the head. The final result was that the tail became a bowstring while its body turned into an enormous bow.

This was a truly mystical matter, but what was even more incomprehensible was that the arrows used by this massive mountainous bow were actually those fine hairs on its tail. What those black hairs were made of was a mystery. On the Monster Bull's body, they were as soft as silk, yet when they were launched from the tailstring, they became as firm as iron, as fast as lightning, and impossible to avoid!

With the strength of the upper level of Star Condensation coupled with such a strange and unstoppable method of attack, this terrifying monster slew many experts even as the humans and demons conquered the continent. The tales of the Monster Bull's might spread far and wide to the extent that some people even suspected it to possess the bloodline of the Unicorn. Of course, this sort of conjecture was not very widely accepted. Who knew how many single-horned monsters existed in the misty mountains and abysses of the continent? The Unicorn was such a pure divine beast—how could it leave behind such murderous descendants?

Seeing that massive figure in the monster tide that was slowly straightening itself, that Monster Bull like a mountain peak rising from the ground, Chen Changsheng felt that the hand holding the Demon Commander's Banner Sword was somewhat cold. Even separated by several dozen li, he felt like he could see its eyes. They were two tiny eyes, as small as a grain of rice, emitting a dull dusky light. They were a pair of abnormally frightening eyes.

It was just a feeling, but he firmly believed that this monster could see into his own eyes—else how could he feel threatened from so far away?

Chen Changsheng knew that this horrifying monster would soon launch an unending stream of long-distance attacks at him, but before he could respond to those arrows of hair filled with boundless power, he had many other problems to resolve—for instance, the grumbling that he could faintly hear rising up from the front of the divine path, or those thunderous earth-shattering booms coming from the middle of the monster tide.

That grumbling sound was very weak. If he did not know how terrifying the owner of that sound was, he might have even thought it was somewhat cute.

Chen Changsheng clearly remembered that in the Four Seas Scroll of the Daoist Canon, there was a monster recorded that called out just like this.

That monster was called the Earth Monkey. It had a thin and small body and its fur was the color of yellow earth. Its fierce teeth and neck were both extremely long. It could stand up like a

human, but it would run on all fours. It was incomparably swift, and moreover, its claws and teeth were both very sharp, such that it could be said that there was nothing it could not break through. Its temperament was cruel and bloodthirsty, and its favorite meal was human flesh. The most frightening thing was that this monster was highly skilled at traveling stealthily, its movements so miraculous that it seemed to travel underground. It was incredibly difficult to track it down. Even an opponent that was many times stronger than it would often be caught off guard. They would be ambushed and then be eaten alive and thus die. It was an extremely horrifying picture.

Yet what made him the most wary was that thundering coming from the ocean that was the monster tide.

The thunder was the sound of the ground cracking apart. This was not caused by sword intent rising upwards but by some monster with boundless strength tearing apart the earth as it angrily roared.

He saw the dreadful figure which was like a mountain amidst the monster tide, and he knew that it had not completely stood up. Rather, it was bending its waist as it searched for a weapon. This weapon could be a mountain, or it could also be those solid rocks that lay underneath the soft mud. The bigger and heavier the rock, the easier it would be to use.

This monster was called the Mountain-toppling Fiend. It had a long mouth and coiled horns, and possessed an unimaginably brutish strength. Its strength was such that it could push down mountains, then use the hills as weapons and throw crushed

stones that they seemed like stars. The gales that were its roars were like knives. It was fearless beyond compare, and the Pavilion of Divination had ranked it third on its ranking of monsters.

The Monster Bull, the Earth Monkey, and the Mountain-toppling Fiend—they were all monsters that had the qualifications for their names to be entered in the Daoist Canon, and they were terrifyingly strong. They had become legends, or perhaps been forgotten, but who would think that in this day and age in which humans and demons had long reigned over the continent, their figures would be found in these plains of the Garden of Zhou?

The restrictive rules of the Garden of Zhou that governed what level of cultivation humans needed to be to enter seemed to have no effect on these monsters. It was no wonder that over these past few centuries, all the human cultivators and demons that had entered these Plains of the Unsetting Sun had never come out. It seemed that they had already become food for these horrifying monsters.

A black hair soared across from the horizon, almost causing Chen Changsheng to lose his grip on the Demon Commander's Banner Sword. The grumbling sound nearing the mausoleum and the thunderous noises from the distant plains entered his ear and made his face go deathly pale. For an instant, he had felt the shadow of death upon him.

Previously, because of that massive shadow, these high-ranked monsters had remained silent. Now that the ten thousand swords had ascended to the sky and Nanke danced amidst the remnants of the rain, they no longer remained silent. Thus, three unimaginably

powerful Qis began to spread out in front of the mausoleum, then they began to grow increasingly berserk.

Chen Changsheng was only at the upper level of Ethereal Opening. Even with these countless swords by his side, he could not change this fact. These three upper level Star Condensation monsters, whether it was in cultivation or strength, were capable of crushing him. He even found it hard to resist the pressure of these three monsters, so what could he do?

Suddenly he recalled that on their way to the Mausoleum of Zhou, Nanke had wanted to shadow them and thus used the Soul Wood to forbid those monsters from attacking. If she had not, then perhaps they would have already died. As for why Nanke did not have those monsters lead the way, they had their speculations.

"These monsters don't necessarily listen to your orders."

Chen Changsheng gazed upwards at that colossal shadow in the sky and thought about the legendary monster, half a step into the Saint realm, that lay behind that shadow. After a moment of silence, he turned to Nanke and said those words.

The remnants of rain fell from those scattered clouds in the sky: drip drop drip drop. Nanke's eyes were closed while her black hair madly danced behind her small body. The Soul Wood floated in front of her, growing ever brighter, like it was about to turn transparent. She paid no attention to his words, or perhaps she did not even hear them.

The monster tide continued to sweep towards the mausoleum. The nearby plains that had just been dyed blood-red were quickly covered up by the black ocean.

The sinister grumbling sound was growing weaker and weaker, but this did not mean that the terrifying Earth Monkey was leaving. On the contrary, it signified that it was preparing to launch its attack!

The Mountain-toppling Fiend was in the waters of the plain. It had finally found a several zhang long stone beam and stood straight up. Thus, a hill appeared in the middle of the monster tide.

Behind the black ocean, the Monster Bull silently gazed at the mausoleum. Its eyes the size of grains of rice emitted a dusky light as they rested on Chen Changsheng's body. Its slender tail curled around the horn on its head, and then stretched tight, with several thousand black hairs densely arranged on its surface.

It was impossible for Chen Changsheng to defeat these three high-ranked monsters, but he did not fear them. His eyes were still bright, just like the brightest lights of those countless damaged swords that surrounded the mausoleum.

Around the mausoleum, the cold wind gently blew and the ten thousand swords softly cried.

The distant monster tide was like an ocean, the great monsters like mountains.

The Mountain Sea Sword flew back in front of him, slightly trembling.

To move and to not move were two incompatible actions. The swords and the monsters would inevitably clash in battle.

If these damaged swords were to go off on their own and battle with the monster tide, then in their disorganized action, they would most likely fall one by one and thus perish.

But now, he was here.

The ten thousand swords were an army. Perhaps some would be soldiers, or perhaps the vanguard, or perhaps the center of the army, but he was the general.

How should he command these countless swords in this battle?

He did not know. Even though he had studied the Daoist Canon since he was a child, even though he had completely memorized every book the Orthodox Academy had on cultivation, he still could not have learned all these ten thousand sword styles. No one could do this. Then how could he command these innumerable swords so that they could express their full might?

He grasped the Yellow Paper Umbrella and sensed the message transmitted by that sword intent.

Entering the plains, finding the Mausoleum of Zhou, and the appearance of the Sword Pool—all of these things had to do with this strand of sword intent.

Perhaps that was the answer.

He sensed that sword intent's pride and calmness.

Pride and calmness were two entirely different emotions, even slightly contradictory. For the most part, they would not appear together at the same time, whether it was with a sword intent or a person.

Strangely, Chen Changsheng felt this mixture of pride and steadiness to be very familiar. It was not the sort of familiarity he had with the Daoist Canon which he could memorize back to front, but a true familiarity. It was the sort of familiarity he had seen with his eyes, sensed with his soul, and even battled with.

The answer came very simply. This was the sword intent of Mount Li. He had once felt it on the bodies of those young geniuses from Mount Li— Guan Feibai was arrogant and conceited, thus cold; Gou Hanshi was calm and warm, thus kind; Liang Banhu was silent and taciturn, thus trustworthy; and Qi Jian possessed all three of their traits.

Originally this sword intent had come from Mount Li. He observed the Yellow Paper Umbrella in silence.

At this moment, he still did not know that this strand of sword intent belonged to the legendary Heaven Shrouding Sword, but he knew what he should do now.

Even if Zhou Dufu was reborn, he would not be able to use ten thousand sword intents to command ten thousand damaged swords to display ten thousand sword styles, so there was no hope for him to do so. Yet he could use this sword intent from Mount Li to command the ten thousand swords to use the ten thousand sword styles of Mount Li. The only question he had to address was how to simultaneously control a legion of spiritual senses.

When there is only one problem to solve, that question would often be the most difficult to resolve. Even the philosopher of metaphysics in the Li Palace which thought of strange things every day would not believe that there was someone who could split their spiritual sense into countless strands. There was not even a need to try, but Chen Changsheng wanted to attempt it.

His left hand gripped the handle of the Yellow Paper Umbrella. His spiritual sense swiftly moved, commanding the sword intent in the umbrella to scatter around the mausoleum. In an instant, it made contact with those damaged swords. He clearly sensed the remnants of sword intent within those damaged swords. Those sword intents were already exhausted and weak, and some of them were so faint that he could barely sense them.

He respectfully and firmly requested those sword intents to yield and hand over their control.

The tyrannical Mountain Sea Sword agreed.

The aloof temple sword agreed.

The ten thousand swords floating in the air around the mausoleum all agreed.

# Chapter 334 - The Swords Flying In The Grassland Were Like Mount Li

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All of the swords were in consensus, including the sword that was in the air in front of the main entrance of the mausoleum. It was the sword that flew the highest, glowed the brightest to the point that it was blinding, and was at the same time the proudest. It also did not disagree. However, the sword trembled slightly and resonated and seemed slightly in disdain towards the sword intent that entered it, ignoring its origin completely.

Now, the Mount Li sword intent already connected to the ten thousand swords. What he needed to do was to let the ten thousand swords use sword moves through the sword intent, and the move used obviously should have been from the Mount Li Sword Style—because of his engagement with Xu Yourong and the many matters that happened in the capital, between the Orthodox Academy and the Mount Li Sword Sect, between him and the Divine State's Seven Laws that was represented by Qiushan Jun, there was an almost irresolvable hatred. However, interestingly, what he knew the most was the Mount Li Sword Style.

It was because the secrets of the Mount Li Sword Style had always been with him, and also because, ever since he started cultivating, all of the genius opponents he fought against came from Mount Li.

The Mount Li Sword Sect was the sword of the main mountain of the southern sects. They cultivated in the path of the sword every generation, and it was unknown as to how many sword styles they had created since the ancient times. There were over thirty

thousand moves that were eligible of entering the secrets of the Mount Li Sword Style, and they had all been firmly remembered by him. Of course, it was impossible for him to use a short year to completely grasp all of the sword intents that were needed in all the different sword moves, but right now, with the help of the Mount Li sword intent in the Yellow Paper Umbrella, he did not have any difficulties in using the Mount Li Sword Style. The greatest problem was still his spiritual sense.

Just how many times could he split his spiritual sense? Just how many swords could he control to use the Mount Li Sword Style?

In the initial sunny sky right after the rain, Nanke's eyes were closed. Her small face was pale, and her black hair danced. The Soul Wood glowed brightly, and she commanded the monsters to attack the mausoleum. At the same time, she prepared for a final strike. Looking at her and the black sea formed by the monster tide behind her, as well as the two terrifying and huge monsters that were like mountains, Chen Changsheng also closed his eyes.

There were over thirty thousand sword moves in the secrets of the Mount Li Sword Style. At an unimaginable speed, they all transformed into images that seemed real and rushed past him in his sea of consciousness without end.

In the surroundings of the mausoleum, there was a series of quiet grinding sounds. Afterwards, vague squeaking sounds could be heard, sometimes from the east and sometimes from the west. They travelled several li in a moment, making it completely impossible to clearly locate where they came from. Naturally, it was even more impossible to attack. The treacherous and huge

Earth Monkey arrived.

Chen Changsheng kept his eyes closed and then suddenly raised his right arm, pointing at a certain direction in front of the divine path.

As he pointed, a concentrated yet extremely sharp series of swords resonated in the air before the mausoleum.

A hundred swords pierced through the sky.

By the willow leaves, through the eighteen twists of the mountain path and before the ravine of Horse Mountain.

The sword moves were all the Mountain Gate Style of the Mount Li Sword Sect.

From the first move to the last move, the hundred swords all performed one hundred moves.

This was equal to one hundred Mount Li Sword Sect disciples performing sword moves at the same time.

Logically, it was impossible for Chen Changsheng to be so plentiful in true essence. However, it cannot be forgotten that these swords were currently burning their own lives. This was their final battle. With his current level of cultivation and the extremely powerful Heaven Shrouding Sword intent, the power that the one hundred swords burst forth with could not be

compared to the moves performed by normal Mount Li Sword Sect disciples. Instead, it was at the level of inner sect disciples, or even the Divine State's Seven Laws.

One hundred Liang Banhus, one hundred Qi Jians, or even one hundred Guan Feibais performing sword moves at the same time. Just how powerful would this be?

Even if it was an expert at peak Star Condensation realm, he would be unable to receive the sword ray head-on. What about upper level Star Condensation realm monsters?

The sword rays crisscrossed before the divine path and rushed forth swiftly and fiercely, completely purging the front portion of the divine path. A mountain gate formed by sword rays stood before the divine path in a grand fashion. The mountain gate stood towering and grandiose, solemn and sacred, as if it came from Mount Li.

A roar of anger and frustration reverberated from underground, and closely following it, the ground opened up. The Earth Monkey transformed into a streak trailing a strand of black blood and rushed towards the outer area of the mausoleum for dear life. It was actually heavily injured with one strike.

The one hundred swords did not chase and instead slowly bobbed up and down in the air in front of the divine path.

The mountain gate became misty, as if it was in the clouds.

With the clouds, it seemed moist. The dark clouds that were sliced by the sword intents, in accordance with natural laws, slowly began to draw together once more. It began to rain once again, only that it was lighter by a lot.

Nanke's eyes remained closed, and the drizzle drenched her pale face.

The zither-playing old man fell on the divine path, covered in blood. He was already dead. Ning Qiu had fainted, and so had Hua Cui. Only the powerful Demon General couple remained standing. They held onto the bent metal pole and the metal pot with the broken bottom and stood under Nanke, protecting her.

Looking at the mountain gate formed by the one hundred swords, the expressions of the couple both became serious—with one hundred swords acting simultaneously, terrifying monsters at the upper level of Star Condensation were immediately injured, so it was needless to mention the two of them with their suppressed cultivation level at the upper realm of Ethereal Opening. Even if they could recover their powerful battle capabilities from outside the Garden of Zhou, could they receive the violent attacks from the swords?

What caused them to be most shocked and confused was why Chen Changsheng's spiritual sense had reached such a level; that he was actually able to split it into one hundred portions and use one hundred swords to perform one hundred sword moves.

In the continent, had something like this ever occurred before?

The Soul Wood before Nanke grew brighter and brighter, and the shadow in the sky dropped lower and lower, almost reaching right above her.

The monster tide with the semblance of a black ocean finally arrived in the surroundings of the mausoleum. It spread out and then rushed forwards, beginning its attacks. Countless monsters leapt onto the great stones of the mausoleum while howling and roaring, quickly climbing upwards. In a very short amount of time, the lower half of the mausoleum was swallowed by the monster tide, becoming a mess. The monsters that were pressed together surged incessantly, and it seemed slightly disgusting.

The mausoleum was just too huge, and there were just too many monsters. They were everywhere. The one hundred swords on the divine path chopped and killed continually, like a true mountain gate, but they were not able to stop the power of the monster tide's advance. Chen Changsheng needed even more swords. The swords hovered in the sky above the mausoleum.

Standing on the edge of the stone platform, his complexion turned slightly pale. He tightly closed his two eyes, causing his eyelashes to tremble slightly.

Countless moves of the Mount Li Sword Style constantly flashed through his sea of consciousness. His spiritual sense and the sword intent landed on all of the swords through the Yellow Paper Umbrella.

Ten thousand spiritual senses; ten thousand swords.

Ten thousand sword rays; ten thousand swishes.

Countless swift but fierce sword swishes echoed in the surroundings of the mausoleum and immediately overtook the roars of the brutal monsters, claiming the entire Plains of the Unsetting Sun.

Countless swords flew through the air, flying and killing the monster tide.

The drizzle could not cover up the setting sun at the edge of the grassland. The red light from the ball of light that did not seem to have any temperature landed on the swords.

The swords were as if they had been set ablaze. The swords flew around the surroundings of the mausoleum, travelling through the sky like golden crows.

Golden Crow Returns to Mount Li.

This was a sword move.

An extremely powerful sword move.

Swish swish swish swish!

Countless concentrated sounds of slicing resonated. The several hundreds of monsters in the southwest of the mausoleum were sliced into pieces by the golden sword rain.

Several dozen swords dispersed in the northern skies of the mausoleum. The sword energy brought out a tail that seemed like flowers blooming at a crazy rate.

Many Flowers like Embroidery.

This was also a sword move.

On the ground of the grassland, countless deep sword slashes appeared instantly.

The ten or so dragon serpents that surged towards the mausoleum were cut into pieces, and the pieces of flesh constantly twitched in the blood.

There were even more countless swords that flew through the sky violently, clashing with the sharp claws and teeth of the monsters.

The fresh blood of the monsters and the glow of the swords mixed and dyed the world.

Under the remaining light of the setting sun, in the light drizzle, the swords resonated above the sea of grass.

The mausoleum was like a huge fishing boat.

Three Chants of the Fisherman's Song.

It was still a sword move of Mount Li.

Chen Changsheng's face turned paler and paler, and the trembling of his body became stronger and stronger.

However, he grasped the Yellow Paper Umbrella and stood in the drizzle without falling over in the end. As a result, the swords continued to fight.

Hundreds of swords arrived before the Mountain-toppling Fiend that was like a mountain.

The Mountain-toppling Fiend gave out an angry roar, and the stone pillar in his hand smashed towards the rain of swords with unbelievable power.

An explosive resonance reverberated through the grassland.

The rain of swords fell apart for a second before reforming once again, flying to kill the Mountain-toppling Fiend.

Mountain Spirit Splits the Cliff.

Pulling Stars Across the Day.

Dew Droplet Falls from the Wutong Leaf.

These were the three moves that were used successively in the battle between Qi Jian and Tang Thirty-Six under Gou Hanshi's guidance at the Ivy Festival in a previous instance.

Today, it had been used by Chen Changsheng to handle this terrifying monster.

On the body of the Mountain-toppling Fiend that stood like a mountain, several hundreds of clear sword slashes appeared.

Seeing this scene and seeing the countless scenes of gore around the mausoleum, the solemn expression on the couple, Teng Xiaoming and Liu Wan'er, had already disappeared, leaving only pale complexions behind. It was unknown how many experts of the human army they had seen on the snowy plains, and no matter how shocking the scenes had been, they had seen it all. They also saw too many magical things today before the mausoleum.

However, at this moment, they remained so shocked that they were speechless.

Teng Xiaoming's expression revealed some perplexity. He looked at Chen Changsheng who was in the rain and mumbled, "How is this possible?"

# Chapter 335 - The Golden-Winged Great Peng Appears

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To simultaneously control ten thousand swords required ten thousand strands of spiritual sense. Who could possess such powerful spiritual sense? Even if Zhou Dufu was reborn, even he would not be able to do it, and yet Chen Changsheng had done precisely this. For this reason, besides shock, Teng Xiaoming was even more perplexed. He did not understand how he was able to do such a thing.

Back then in the library of the Orthodox Academy when Chen Changsheng was fixing his Fated Star, his spiritual sense had spread out over the night sky of the capital. As the Divine Empress was observing the stars, she made the following evaluation: "This person's spiritual sense is so strong, his mind so serene. Such a person is very rare in this world. Perhaps this is some old scholar who bitterly studied for a hundred years and then in one day comprehended the principles of heaven and earth. Only in this way could this person have such good fortune. Just like Wang Zhice all those years ago, this person accumulated their strength and then rose up. Naturally, this is no ordinary person." In this evaluation, the Divine Empress had compared Chen Changsheng to Wang Zhice, who had comprehended the Dao in a single night and caused the night sky to shine with the radiance of the stars. From this, one could imagine how powerful Chen Changsheng's spiritual sense was. Yet if it were even stronger, it still would not have surpassed Zhou Dufu's. The reason why he could separate his spiritual sense into countless strands crucially rested on the second trait the Divine Empress had mentioned in her evaluation.

The number of strands a spiritual sense could be divided into had

nothing to do with a spiritual sense's inherent strength, only with how stable it was.

Zhou Dufu, this peerless expert, naturally possessed a spiritual sense many times more powerful than Chen Changsheng. That spiritual sense was like a solid and massive rock. It could be divided in two or even into several dozen strands, but it could not be divided forever. At some point, they would be nothing but tiny bits of gravel that could no longer be divided into anything smaller.

Chen Changsheng's spiritual sense was incomparably serene. Although he could not have a spiritual sense as impregnable as an expert at Zhou Dufu's level, he could make it even softer and more yielding. Not like solid rock, but like water. It could be divided into countless drops, then countless droplets, and then mist. It was as if he could continue dividing it without end.

Countless swords flew around the mausoleum, occasionally landing in the monster tide and subsequently erupting in a shower of blood. Sometimes, they would encounter unyielding resistance that immediately broke some of the damaged and old swords, making for a rather tragic sight. When the ten thousand swords had just begun their battle with the monster tide, several dozen of the fastest and most intact swords were led by the Mountain Sea Sword and commanded by Chen Changsheng's spiritual sense to fly with focus and resolve deep into the plains. With this, they finally arrived at the Monster Bull's position.

The Monster Bull's grainy eyes emitted a ruthless, dusky light. The slender tail linked to its horn was stretched tight. The grass

around it had long been squashed flat by the berserk Qi it was emitting. The only sound to be heard was countless densely packed soft swishes. The several thousand black hairs on its tail transformed into nearly invisible and sharp arrows that shot towards the mausoleum.

'Dongdongdongdong!' A series of successive strikes resounded out from the depths of the plain. Those sounds were so packed together they seemed like one long sound.

Several dozen sword rays appeared in the air several li in front of the Monster Bull. They danced about in the air like lightning, accompanied by sword energy that formed countless dense halos of light in the air. The several thousand black hairs that had been shot out by the Monster Bull were completely blocked by the sword rays. In the blink of an eye, the air was filled with several thousand tiny white vortexes. That was the result of sword energy colliding with those black hairs. The surface of the plains became covered with thousands of tiny thread-like cracks. The catfish and loaches that had luckily managed to survive for the time being did not even have time to burrow into the mud before they were sliced into bits.

The Mountain Sea Sword did not go to block those black hairs that were shooting towards the mausoleum. It burst out of that ring of swords with the intent to kill. The heavy black sword body pierced through the air, giving off an ear-aching screech. From up high, it directly chopped at the horn on the Monster Bull's head, using the Burning Heaven move that Su Li had personally created.

The plain was filled with the sounds of swords cutting at tough monster skin. Chunks of meat flew everywhere as countless sword

glows gradually dimmed. Innumerable monsters lay collapsed at either the feet of the mausoleum or amongst the weeds. The drizzle around the mausoleum was still falling, but when would this rain of swords over the plains cease?

Nanke's eyes were still closed, and the Soul Wood in front continued to shine brighter and brighter. In that milky white light, her small face seemed even more pale. Teng Xiaoming and Liu Wan'er acted as protectors, emitting a powerful and determined Qi. Not a single sword approached her body.

After who knows how long had passed, she finally opened her eyes. The drizzling rain fell upon her face, but that dark-green flame burning within her cold and emotionless pupils was not at all extinguished by the cold rain. Instead, for some reason, a sacred golden light floated around her pupils. Furthermore, that golden light was eroding away that green color.

Chen Changsheng opened his eyes and gazed at her as she floated in front of the mausoleum's main entrance.

The two calmly gazed at each other, saying nothing.

Nanke viewed herself as the successor to the Garden of Zhou. Her methods originated from the restrictions that Zhou Dufu had left behind. The restrictions had maintained the ten thousand damaged swords in the Garden of Zhou for several hundred years. Today, Chen Changsheng wanted to rely on those countless damaged swords and take them away. This would inevitably lead to the destruction of the fundamental basis of the Garden of Zhou. It was something she could not allow. So even if she had to risk the

danger of being beheaded by those swords, she had chosen to send her soul out of her body. Through this, she was able to make use of the most powerful method at her disposal to kill Chen Changsheng, return the ten thousand swords to their proper place, and restore the plain to tranquility.

Of course, Chen Changsheng would not accept this arrangement, regardless of it being the arrangements of fate or the arrangements made by Zhou Dufu prior to his death.

The battle between the ten thousand swords and the monster tide continued. In that short moment in which their gazes met, who knew how many horrifying and bloody scenes occurred? The two sides of this battle were swords and monsters, so there was naturally nobody talking. There was only the whistling of swords and the howls of monsters. There were no killing cries, yet the killing intent on the plain soared to the heavens.

After a short while, the monster tide gradually calmed and shortly after slowly retreated to the outer perimeter of the mausoleum. Perhaps it was because they realized it was impossible for them to break through those ten thousand damaged swords, or perhaps it was because Nanke had sent her command through the Soul Wood, or perhaps it was because they had sensed something else.

Chen Changsheng raised his right hand. As rain dripped upon it, the countless swords in the plain returned.

Several tens of thousands of lower-ranked monsters had died. The sinister and crafty Earth Monkey had attempted a sneak attack

on Chen Changsheng in the very beginning. In the end, Chen Changsheng had successfully counterattacked, which had it suffer heavy injuries from the temple sword. With one hind leg chopped off and one hind leg crippled, it could no longer stand up straight like a human. Hugging the thigh of the Mountain-toppling Fiend, it resentfully stared at the mausoleum, giving off angry grumbling sounds as if it was complaining.

The Mountain-toppling Fiend's massive body was extremely striking in the middle of that ocean of a monster tide, but its tenacious body was covered with at least several thousand sword scars, both deep and small. Some swords had succeeded in breaking through its terrifying defense and striking at the flesh. Its body was drenched with blood that flowed down the broken stone beam in its hand, dripping down to the ground.

The Monster Bull deep within the plains seemed to have suffered the lightest injuries. It was just that the vast majority of the black hairs on its tail had all been fired off, leaving only a few tufts. It was like it had been burned in a fire, leaving behind a mottled pattern. It was very sorry-looking and dismal, and also rather ridiculous. It was no longer as terrifying as it used to be.

Countless swords flew back to the mausoleum. Some of the swords had been broken once more, leaving only a small section of the blade. They were similarly as dismal-looking as that Monster Bull, their state rather sorrowful. Some of the swords had been attacked by monster poison. The rust had been eroded away, letting them shine once more, yet it was still hard for them to bear such an attack, and they tottered back to the mausoleum on the verge of collapse.

Not a single sword had fallen into the plain, but now they fell. Because it could see whenever one of those swords was about to fall, another sword would rush over and support it from below. Even those swords that had been shattered in battle by the monsters and stamped into the mud were picked out by other swords. In this way, several swords supporting each other flew to the mausoleum.

This scene was very easy to associate with a real battle. Under a bloody sun, hearing the sound of the gong calling the victorious soldiers back to camp, the injured and exhausted soldiers simply did not have the strength to cheer. Supporting each other, they slowly made their way back to the camp. Those soldiers who did not have the strength to walk would be helped up by their companions through the aid of crude tree branches.

Chen Changsheng did not leave a single sword behind in the plain. This might cause some people to be moved, but Nanke was not the sort of person to feel such trivial passion. From this scene, Nanke saw Chen Changsheng's strength. He could spread out his mind to countless places and persist until now. This was a sight seldom seen such that even she was filled with admiration.

But the more admirable he was, the more he needed to die.

That dark-green flame in Nanke's pupils had already become divine gold. A sacred Qi that was hard to describe in words emerged from her petite body. At this moment, it was hard to tell that she was the Demon Princess. She seemed more similar to the South Stream Temple's Holy Maiden.

That dreadful shadow had already completely landed behind her.

Behind her were the Plains of the Unsetting Sun.

That shadow had once obscured half the sky. Now that it had landed, it covered up the entire plain. The dusky rays of light sent by that distant setting sun landed upon that shadow and seemed to be sucked up right away. There was no reflection. Just like that, they disappeared without a trace.

The present plain was covered with blood. The shadow seemed to slightly rise up and down, as if that blood was bringing it to life.

The light of the setting sun was no longer swallowed up. As the light mixed with the blood, it turned it into a golden color, identical to the color of the flame that burned in Nanke's eyes.

A golden color appeared on the edge of the shadow. Gradually, a shape began to be traced out. With the slow dance of the golden light, this form became more distinct.

It was a pair of wings. A pair of golden wings.

These golden wings were colossal. Who knew how many thousands of li they were, but they spanned across the horizon.

The Golden-Winged Great Peng finally revealed its true appearance.

Along with its appearance, the world changed color. Those dark clouds that had just gathered themselves anew above the mausoleum instantly dispersed.

All the monsters fearfully lowered their heads. One by one, they each adopted the most servile posture and lowered themselves into the blood and chaotic mix of grass and mud. Wave after wave, the monster tide bowed down. Even that most arrogant and tyrannical Mountain-toppling Fiend humbly bowed before the shadow of the Great Peng.

Behind the Great Peng was the setting sun. Countless rays of light overflowed over the edge of the Great Peng's wings, creating countless threads of light in the sky.

This scene was so beautiful that it seemed surreal. It was just like the scene described in the myth contained in the Orthodoxy's Daoist Canon.

In truth, there was a mural in the Great Hall of Light in the Li Palace. Depicted on that mural was a scene from ancient times, the scene of the strange phenomena occurring on heaven and earth as the Golden-winged Great Peng was born from a cloud of light.

The very moment the Golden-winged Great Peng was born into the world, it had touched upon the cusp of the Saint realm.

Whether it was myth or legend or truth, the Golden-winged Great Peng was a divine beast on the same level as the Unicorn and

the Divine Bird, sitting only below the Dragon and the Phoenix.

Chen Changsheng silently gazed at the Golden-winged Great Peng as it enveloped the sky.

When he first laid eyes on that shadow, he had been waiting for this moment to come.

Yet just like death, no matter how many preparations you make, when it finally makes its appearance, you realize that you still aren't prepared.

Right now, he was experiencing exactly this sort of feeling.

This Golden-winged Great Peng was like death incarnate.

# Chapter 336 - The Brightest Star In The Night Sky

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Divine beasts at levels like the Golden-winged Great Peng were capable of shaking both the heavens and the earth. Before, in the time that had already passed when Chen Changsheng did not have the ten thousand swords, he would not have been able to block a casual flap of its wings, and would definitely die. However, for some reason, it remained as a shadow and floated quietly as a shadow in the sky, never attacking the mausoleum. Only now, when Nanke used a secret technique to send her spiritual sense into the shadow, did the scene before Chen Changsheng's eyes occur.

Perhaps it was just like the conclusion Xu Yourong and Chen Changsheng had reached: Nanke who only had the Soul Wood, and not the Soul Pivot, was unable to completely control the monsters in the grassland—at least, it was not enough to control a divine beast like the Golden-winged Great Peng. As a result, Nanke needed such a long amount of time to invite the Great Peng to appear.

Just how could he face up against this terrifying divine beast? For Chen Changsheng's upper level Ethereal Opening cultivation to accomplish such a deed would be the same as a myth. The Black Dragon continued to sleep in the lake outside his Ethereal Palace. Even if it woke up at this moment, what entered the Garden of Zhou was just a spiritual soul of the Black Dragon, and was unable to face up against a Golden-winged Great Peng that actually existed.

Even with the help of the ten thousand broken swords, there was not any possibility of success. After all, he was not as strong as the owners of the swords from before. At this moment, the pressure and light of the Golden-winged Great Peng stilled the swords. Although there was no fear, this silence already indicated that they could not be an opponent of the Golden-winged Great Peng.

Only the first ten or so swords that had appeared—the Mountain Sea Sword, the temple sword and so on—lifted up their pommels slightly. They raised in power silently, as if they were prepared to attack at any moment. In the ten thousand swords, the strongest and proudest sword of them all trembled at great speeds, giving out a continuous hum.

The sword trembled, not out of fear, but out of excitement.

Seeing the Golden-winged Great Peng glide towards the mausoleum with countless rays of light, the sword... was very excited, and was rushing to fight it in close quarters.

Before, Chen Changsheng had already noticed the sword.

It was because this sword was the highest and proudest sword of the ten thousand swords. It did not even have any intention of backing down to the sword intent of the Yellow Paper Umbrella. At the same time, it was the brightest sword, shining back at the light that scattered from the edge of the plains, just like the brightest star in the night sky. It had its own air of nobility.

Looking at the sword, Chen Changsheng associated it very easily

with that scene at the Ivy Festival when Luoluo announced to the crowd that she was the daughter of the White Emperor. This type of pride did not originate from the exterior. The nobility originated from the bloodline. Even if the opponent was a Golden-winged Great Peng, just how could it feel fear?

The sword was currently high up in the sky above the mausoleum, and extremely far from the ground. Chen Changsheng extended his hand into the air, and through the Yellow Paper Umbrella, he conveyed his idea. Afterwards, the sword intent that had been separated returned to the Yellow Paper Umbrella, returning freedom back to the sword itself.

With a whoosh, the sword transformed into an extremely bright sword ray. It returned to the stone platform in front of the mausoleum from high up in the sky, and fell into Chen Changsheng's hand.

Holding onto the sword hilt, Chen Changsheng thought about the history of the sword. Afterwards, when he gazed at the Golden-Winged Great Peng covered by an aura tens of thousands of zhang across, his gaze became more resolute.

The sword was called the Dragoncry Sword. It was very powerful. Before, when it was in his hand, a strike from it heavily injured Teng Xiaoming.

However, even more importantly, the Dragoncry Sword once belonged to a prince of the imperial family of Great Zhou.

The prince was called Chen Xuanba, and he was Emperor Taizong's youngest brother. He was endowed with exceptional talent since youth, and cultivated to peak level Star Condensation at a very young age. Even though it was in a great age of blossoming flowers and the birth of geniuses, he was still regarded as a peerless genius, because what flowed in him was the blood of the true dragon.

In other words, he was that generation's Qiushan Jun.

Chen Xuanba died when he was very young.

When he died, the great army that originated from the Tianliang County had just taken the capital. This was before the government had been changed and the Zhou Dynasty founded. His title as Prince had also been conferred posthumously. However, nobody questioned this, and it had nothing to do with his surname. It was because the entire continent understood what sort of role he played when the great army of Tianliang County swept across the continent.

In the imperial family of the Zhou Dynasty, this mighty youth who had died young was publicly renowned as the greatest expert. Although he did not fight against his second brother Emperor Taizong before he died, no one questioned this, because he had only died after fighting Zhou Dufu for a night and a day in the Garden of Zhou.

Until now, because of some complicated reasons, there were already very few people who still remembered Chen Xuanba, the name that was once overbearing without equal. There were also

very few records in the official dynastic history regarding him. However, whenever the people who still remembered the history from before heard the name Chen Xuanba or the Dragoncry Sword which once belonged to his waist, they would feel a lot of complicated feelings of sorrow.

Because Chen Xuanba had died early, he did not compete in the bloody battle between Emperor Taizong and his brothers for the imperial throne. To the mighty youth who had died young, it could be regarded as some sort of happiness, but to the imperial family of Chen, it was instead an extremely great misfortune. This was because if he was still alive, under his great battle prowess, it was extremely possible that the battle would not happen at all. Even if the conflicting views had lasted for a long time, perhaps it would not have been so bitter and bloody, causing hundreds of members of the imperial family to be killed and the capital to turn into a river of blood in the end.

Of course, there was an even more widespread rumor that if Chen Xuanba could have lived until afterwards, Emperor Taizong would not have been able to take the title of Emperor at all—the records of Tianliang County and the unofficial histories recorded it very clearly, that Chen Xuanba was clearly much closer to his eldest brother, who was the Prince of Jian. If he also participated in the battle for the title of emperor, how could Emperor Taizong—who was in his night clothes—avoid the assassination in the Hundred Herb Garden?

As a result, a chilling conspiracy theory appeared.

Seeing that the army of Tianliang County was about to conquer

the capital, that the Zhou Dynasty was about to be founded, that he was about to become a prince set up high, and that he had an extremely splendid future, just why did Chen Xuanba take the initiative to enter the Garden of Zhou and battle Zhou Dufu? Yes, not much of it was recorded in the currently-existing records. However, all of those who were once involved said extremely clearly that it was Chen Xuanba who had proposed the battle between peerless experts himself. Why? According to the official history, it was exactly because Chen Xuanba saw that the Zhou Dynasty was about to be founded, and he did not need to shoulder the heavy responsibilities of the clan, so he continued his pursuit of the Heavenly Dao. It was just that this type of explanation lacked some cogency. Most importantly, on the verge of defeat, why did he have to die? Even if Zhou Dufu did not care about the anger of the imperial family of the Great Zhou, did he not care about how Emperor Taizong felt? It must be known that Emperor Taizong was Chen Xuanba's direct second brother, and also Zhou Dufu's sworn brother.

It was no longer possible to clear up the past history. Chen Xuanba was dead. Emperor Taizong was also dead. Looking at the mausoleum now, it could basically be confirmed that Zhou Dufu was also dead. Heroic figures always left with hardships, and what was left was the Dragoncry Sword in the Garden of Zhou, carrying the glory that it once had and the pride it had from before.

Young member of the Imperial Family, peerless war god, true dragon bloodline—this was Chen Xuanba.

The Dragoncry Sword he used was noble without equal and extremely proud. How could it fear the Great Peng?

Chen Changsheng looked at the Dragoncry sword, and felt that remaining pride in the sword. For some reason, he felt that it was extremely familiar.

This type of familiarity was hard to describe and extremely strong. It actually cause his mind to become agitated, and it was hard for him to remain himself.

His hand began to tremble, and as a result, the sword also began to tremble.

# Chapter 337 - True Inheritance

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The Golden-winged Great Peng's shadow had paused in the air several hundred li in front of the mausoleum. The edges of its wings exuded a golden light, yet it only brought darkness to the mausoleum. As it proceeded towards that darkness, its two eyes were like two balls of blazing divine fire. Nanke's black hair danced around her, her petite body calmly suspended between those two balls of divine fire. Although she seemed relatively insignificant, she gave off the feeling that she had already formed a link with the Golden-winged Great Peng that was almost impossible to sever. In other words, right now, she was the Golden-winged Great Peng's divine soul.

In the middle of that shining golden light, an unimaginably terrifying pressure pressed down on the plain. Along with this pressure came a gale of wind. Even the most frenzied winds of the South Sea were not as powerful as this wind. The shredded grass crazily danced in the air and the foul water on the ground was shocked into drops. There was not a single monster that could continue to stand firm. One by one, they all fell down to the ground. The ten thousand broken swords around the mausoleum were buffeted up and down by the wind, just like countless boats on the expanse of the ocean, at any time at risk of being swallowed up by a heaven-shocking wave.

With a cold and arrogant cry, the Golden-winged Great Peng flapped its wings and began to fly even faster towards the mausoleum. It felt like the sky itself was pressing down upon the mausoleum. The golden light at the edge of its wings scattered and then gathered together again, just like a leaping fire, almost as if it were alive. Thus, the entire plain began to burn. Whether it was blood or water, it all began to fiercely blaze.

Atop this burning plain were the countless monsters that formed a black ocean. This black ocean also began to burn, turning into a sea of fire. From the highest-ranked monster to a vole that had been born in the plain, they all stood in the sea of fire, filled with reverence and piety towards that pair of wings that spanned several hundred li in the sky, and howling with an almost crazed devotion.

As the Golden-winged Great Peng approached, the blazing plains shone with light, but the mausoleum sitting in the center of the plain grew even darker. The many swords did their utmost to resist the strong winds brought about by those two massive wings. In quick succession, they all flew to the front of the mausoleum.

The densely packed damaged swords formed into a semi-circular sword array in front of the mausoleum. Chen Changsheng stood in the middle of this vast sword array, also looking relatively insignificant; yet he was also the divine soul of this sword array. His left hand still gripped the Yellow Paper Umbrella, not letting that sword intent return from those ten thousand broken swords. This was because he knew very well that after those broken swords had engaged in that bitter battle with the monster tide, there were many swords that were almost about to give out. If he were to withdraw that Mount Li sword intent, the Golden-winged Great Peng would not even need to do anything for the swords to perish.

Right now, he could only use the sword intent of the Dragoncry Sword. However, several hundred years had passed. Would this sword's sword intent still be strong enough? As the Golden-winged Great Peng approached, he silently sensed the Dragoncry Sword's pride and amiability. Yes, it was a very familiar and even amiable

sense of pride, like he had been born to use this sword.

This indescribable sense of familiarity fiercely shook his mind. Just like whenever Zhexiu fell ill, his heart began to suddenly beat several times faster and his true essence began to move through his meridians at a much faster pace. The hand gripping the sword incessantly trembled. The trembling grew increasingly serious until his entire body began to tremble.

Even the snowy plains in his body began to tremble.

That thick mantle of snow which once rested upon this snowy plain had been the fruit of several hundred nights of bitter cultivation in the Orthodox Academy. It was the purest radiance of the stars. In the Grand Examination and in those several dozen days of battle, this mantle of snow had been burned up. Now, only a shallow layer remained.

The shallow snow was easily shaken. The external shock jolted the snow into the air and tossed it into a collision with those rays of light that were reflecting off that spherical lake. With a boom, the snow began to burn. The star radiance instantly melted into clear water, which turned into a mist, which transformed into the purest true essence. This true essence flooded into his body, then it began to flow through those dry meridians of his that were ruptured like cliffs and incessantly moved forward... for Chen Changsheng, this was an extremely painful course of events, but he did not give off the slightest sound. He only stared at the approaching Golden-winged Great Peng, continuing to hold on. He allowed that shock to continue burning up his snowy plain and allowed that true essence to continue its progress through his

body.

At some point, that true essence finally arrived at his wrist. The shock that originated from his heart met with the shock that came from the sword hilt, then they melded together and transformed into an indescribable battle intent!

The Dragoncry Sword was damaged, its sword intent no longer like it was in the past, but its battle intent still existed!

Carrying a proud and unyielding sword intent, Chen Changsheng's hand wielded the Dragoncry Sword and stabbed it at the Golden-winged Great Peng!

A bright and ancient dragon cry, its meaning difficult to understand, roared out before the stone platform!

A magnificent and shining sword glow carried along an almost real dragon's breath and flew dozens of li through the air. In the middle of the air, it chopped at the space between those two sacred balls of fire that were the Golden-winged Great Peng's eyes!

Nanke was there...

Compared to the sword glow of the Dragoncry Sword, she was so insignificant, just a little black dot. Yet her expression was unchanging. To that extremely bright sword light, she extended a finger.

Through the Soul Wood, she and the Golden-winged Great Peng were one. She was the Golden-winged Great Peng, possessing the strength and spirit of the Saint realm.

She required only a finger to block the sword glow of the Dragoncry Sword.

As it gazed from the plain to the mausoleum, a strange ball of black Qi appeared between the two eyes of the Golden-winged Great Peng.

The ball of Qi was at Nanke's fingertip, the result of a collision between two extremely powerful forces.

In the next moment, that black ball of Qi instantly disappeared. In the air, many faint and tiny cracks appeared, indicating that even the true space was breaking up. Simultaneously, an enormous sound resounded above the plain, like a clap of thunder.

A berserk wind instantly came down from the sky to the ground, then swept off to a thousand li out. The stubborn grass on the face of the mausoleum was all pulled out and blown off to some place. Even the moss attached to the stones at the bottom had been peeled off, and even the stone layer of the mausoleum was somewhat flaky. A massive tide swept through that black ocean atop the burning plain. Under those divine flames that were the Golden-winged Great Peng's eyes, at least several hundred lower-ranked monsters had been shaken to death. As for that sword array in front of the monster, there were also several dozen swords that were wavering.

Chen Changsheng did not hear that thunderclap and did not pay any attention to those previous scenes. He stared at the Dragoncry Sword, because in that previous moment, the Dragoncry Sword had given off an extremely light sound.

It was the sound of cracking.

The Dragoncry Sword was broken, the upper half of its blade falling into the pool of water before him and plopping against the floor.

In Chen Changsheng's ears, this plop was truly thunder.

A thunderclap exploded from the stone platform. Boom!

In the middle of the frenzied wind, Chen Changsheng retreated several dozen zhang and heavily fell against the stone gate, stirring up dust.

His face was pale and blood rushed up his throat, but he swallowed it back down. He felt like all his bones were broken, but he stood back up. Because although the Dragoncry Sword had been broken, its battle intent still remained. Only...

Even if this battle intent was so berserk, even if it had the encouragement of these ten thousand swords, was it still not an opponent for the Golden-winged Great Peng?

Chen Changsheng gazed at the broken sword and noticed that the breakpoint was very neat and smooth, yet it did not seem new. Then he remembered that when he had been holding the Dragoncry Sword, he had faintly noticed a barely discernible line on the blade.

Now he understood that the line was a blade scar.

Countless years ago, Chen Xuanba had brought this sword to the Garden of Zhou and lost to Zhou Dufu's blade. Although he died, he was unwilling to fall down. This sword had clearly already been broken, but it stubbornly insisted on not letting its opponent see. Only after countless years had passed and this proud sword had once again confronted a similarly powerful opponent was it finally no longer able to hold on.

He held the broken sword and then silently and slowly walked back to the edge of the stone platform, once more gazing at the dark sky.

For some reason, that Golden-winged Great Peng needed to combine with Nanke, but it had already proved its power.

Nanke had already disappeared. She had truly become one with the Great Peng. Those two divine flames were still holy and violent. They coldly looked at his insignificant self standing in the middle of the mausoleum as the Great Peng got closer and closer.

The sky changed color as the dark clouds roiled. Countless bolts of lightning flashed like snakes, lighting up the air above the

mausoleum.

The Dragoncry sword was broken, so what sword should he use next? The Mountain Sea Sword or the temple sword? Or should all the swords attack together?

Just at this moment, he suddenly felt a strand of heat from the place on his right hand between his thumb and index finger.

He still had not put down the Dragoncry Sword. That strand of heat had come from the remaining half of the Dragoncry Sword. It was the Dragoncry Sword's sword intent—this proud sword intent, with a sense of broken-heartedness, left the body of the Dragoncry Sword. It took only an instant for that remaining half of the Dragoncry Sword that was still proud and unbending and incomparably bright to turn dim and lightless, as if it had died.

That sword intent entered Chen Changsheng's body, then went inside the dagger at his waist.

Although the heart of his sword had been perfected, he was limited by his cultivation and his sword intent could never become complete. Thus, it was only by using the Yellow Paper Umbrella that he could borrow that Mount Li sword intent to command the ten thousand swords to attack the monster tide. It was also for this reason that his sword intent had never truly fused with his dagger. In other words, this seemingly ordinary dagger felt that his sword intent did not match with it.

Now, the sword intent of the Dragoncry Sword had arrived.

The dagger was still in its sheath, but it began to hum.

Chen Changsheng understood the Dragoncry Sword's meaning. This was an inheritance.

He was somewhat melancholy.

The Dragoncry Sword had passed the sword intent into the dagger, and then it died, while the dagger came to life.

Right now, he could only hope that this method of the Dragoncry Sword could continue his own life, or perhaps his pride.

Then, he had to win.

He gently placed the broken Dragoncry Sword on the ground and then stood back up. Grasping the hilt of the dagger, he pulled it out.

With his actions, a sun appeared in front of the main entrance of the mausoleum.

This sun followed the blade of the dagger. It rose up from the sheath and illuminated the gloomy mausoleum and plain.

It was countless rays of golden light.

It was an incomparably brilliant sword.

A powerful Qi rose up with the dagger, shocking all life around the mausoleum.

Silence.

The sword intent of the Dragoncry Sword had perfectly fused with the dagger. It was just like when Chen Changsheng had first held that sword, like they had been made for each other. But this was still not enough.

This dagger's soul had not yet awakened.

# Chapter 338 - Ten Thousand Swords Form A Dragon

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Burn.

Chen Changsheng spoke to himself. He was very calm.

As the words echoed in his heart, the open plains that held the snow began to burn quickly. The power of the flames was countless times stronger than before, and with just a moment, the snow was completely burned away. At the same time, beautiful blue flames also appeared on the surface of the clear lake surrounding the Spirit Mountain.

The snow melted into water, which transformed into mist. Perhaps it condensed into water again, or perhaps it dispersed as mist. These were all true essence. It swiftly and violently wreaked havoc in his body, forcefully rushing through his blocked meridians. In the dry riverbed, it rushed past rock piles and chasms from the start till the end.

The violent true essence set his blood alight, burning his internal organs and meridians. It brought an unimaginable pain, which caused his face to become extremely pale. However, it also caused his eyes to glow brighter and brighter.

Chen Changsheng raised his own level of cultivation to the peak without the slightest worry. He stood at the doorstep between life and death, and used his own life to fight. He only did so in order to provide enough true essence to the dagger in his hand, to awaken

its soul.

The huge Golden-winged Great Peng in the sky before the mausoleum looked at him indifferently. Strong winds and streams of air merged with the light at the edge of its wings, which seemed extremely magnificent. The sacred flames in its eyes became even colder, actually displaying a vague sense of respect.

Chen Changsheng's body, after bathing in dragon blood, had a defensive ability that was close to perfection. However, with the violent burning of the snowy plains all the way to the lake water, an unimaginable amount of true essence exploded in him. His body was finally unable to bear it any longer, and began to rupture.

The part that ruptured first was the corner of his eyes, and then his eardrums. Several streams of blood flowed from his facial features, and closely following it, the skin on his face also began to crack open. Streams of fresh blood flowed out, and the scene seemed extremely horrifying. In the cracks of blood, bone could be seen, as well as flames that were vaguely like glimmers of stars. The blood flowed from his face and flowed from his hands, causing his clothes to become wet. It also wet the sword hilt and landed on the surface of the stone platform, before continuing to burn.

An indescribable fragrance dispersed into the surroundings of the mausoleum with his blood. As his blood burned, the fragrance became heavier by countless times. It was dispersed even further, all the way to the edge of the grassland.

Those most sensitive to this fragrance were naturally monsters. The black ocean surrounding the mausoleum became violent once

again, and the monsters that were suppressed so much by the might of the Golden-winged Great Peng that they were unable to raise their heads could not resist this smell. It was like the enticement that came from the deepest parts of life, and they all raised their heads one by one to gaze towards the air above the mausoleum. Their breathing sped up, and they panted loudly. They dripped with saliva, and their eyes became bloodshot. They were excited and insatiable.

The Golden-winged Great Peng had also smelled the fragrance. In the shadow that enveloped the sky, its eyes were like two floating balls of sacred flame. At this moment, the two flames began to burn violently, and some emotions finally appeared in its indifferent, sacred Qi.

The emotions were admiration for life, the yearning of life, the thirst for life and... the craving of life.

This was the emotion Chen Changsheng feared the most, and it was the matter that he once feared the most. However, now, he was not scared, because he was only a thin line away from death. His foot was already on the doorstep, and if he could only burn himself to awaken the soul, why did he have to care about these gazes?

The shadow of the Golden-winged Great Peng landed on the mausoleum. It spread open its wings, and enveloped a portion of the grassland with a circumference of thousands of li. Both the sky and ground became dark. All of the light falling on the mausoleum was covered up. It was pitch-black like the true night that the grassland had never seen. The ten thousand swords trembled

slightly, and almost could not withstand it. Some swords slowly fell down like leaves.

An extremely powerful pressure that had no equal mixed in with the insatiable craving. It seemed to become something that was actually material, and landed on Chen Changsheng's body in front of the main entrance of the mausoleum.

Immediately, the fresh blood that flowed on his body coagulated. The burning flames were extinguished. The pressure dispersed the black hair that was tightly tied behind him, and afterwards, the black hair began to shrivel and turn yellow from the end, slowly turning into dust and trailing down.

Awaken.

He looked at the dagger in his hand and said in his heart.

Awaken.

He was speaking to his heart quietly.

What was the heart? It was the Ethereal Palace. Where was the Ethereal Palace? It was on top of the Spirit Mountain. Chen Changsheng's door of the Ethereal Palace had long already been open. There was not a fallen leaf on the Spirit Mountain, and it was surrounded by the lake water that seemed real and fake at the same time. The mountain was in the lake.

The lake that floated in the air was very clear and extremely transparent. On the surface of it burned blue flames. In the deepest parts of it, the spiritual soul of the Black Dragon floated silently. With Chen Changsheng's calling, an extremely light tremble travelled from the Ethereal Palace to the mountain path of the Spirit Mountain. Afterwards, it spread into the lake, and the lake water began to ripple. It gently washed the body of the Black Dragon, like a warm rubbing, like her father waking her up in the morning every day before he had left home.

The Black Dragon slowly opened its eyes. A sliver of disappointment appeared in her slit-like pupils, and she looked at the pieces of ice in the surrounding lake water. She took a while before realising what had happened since she fell asleep, and then felt the tremble at the bottom of the lake from the Ethereal Palace. She heard Chen Changsheng's voice, and took only a moment to understand what was happening outside. She had even seen the Golden-winged Great Peng in the sky.

A cold Qi exuded from her eyes. It was arrogance and disdain. Even though at this very moment she was only a spiritual soul, she was unable to withstand the challenge of the Great Peng. The arrogance and disdain turned into explosive anger.

A clear and angry dragon roar reverberated from the depths of the lake. It did not travel far, but it caused the lake water to surge constantly. The surface of the lake burned even more violently, and with a very loud bang, the Black Dragon burst through the lake water. She left the Ethereal Palace, and flew over the open plains that already had all of its snow incinerated. She followed the mist and the flow of true essence formed by the clear water, and flew over the river beds that were no longer dry. Following Chen

Changsheng's consciousness, she entered his arm, and then entered a completely new world.

The spiritual soul of the Black Dragon entered the dagger, but to her, it was a completely unfamiliar world. It was full of golden light, and what made her ineffably feel familiarity was that she could feel two extremely familiar Qi in the world. The two Qi were so strong that they even caused her to feel slightly uneasy, but contradicting ideas did not form for her, because these two Qis were those of seniors.

No-one, not even Chen Changsheng himself, knew just how closely related the dagger was with the Dragon race.

In the run-down temple at Xining Village, Yu Ren gifted him the dagger. He used the dagger to participate in many fights. The sharpness of the dagger brought many shocks to the world, but actually, the true power of the dagger was not used at all.

It was because his level of cultivation was too ordinary, and was unable to refine a sword intent that matched up to the dagger. It was also because fifteen years ago, when the dagger was successfully smelted, it was always in a state of unwillingness, unwilling to awaken.

Until now, when the dragon soul had entered the dagger, and met the sword intent of the Dragoncry Sword. This cause the dagger to awaken.

To truly awaken.

Chen Changsheng did not know what change occurred to the dagger, but he knew that it was awakened.

The soul of the sword had awakened.

He raised his head and looked at the Golden-winged Great Peng in the sky above the mausoleum. His expression was calm, his eyes bright and full of intent to battle. The ten thousand swords in the surroundings of the mausoleum slowly corrected their position and pointed towards the Great Peng under his gaze, ready to fight.

Go, he said to the dagger through his heart. However, he did not know that he had actually yelled the word out with his mouth.

“Go!”

He threw the dagger in his hand towards the sky.

The dagger turned into a streak of golden light and left the stone platform before the main entrance of the mausoleum. It flew towards the Golden-winged Great Peng. With a trembling of the world, countless rays of gold light arose from before the mausoleum. The ten thousand swords resonated simultaneously, giving out a clear or rough sword resonance.

Ten thousand swords pierced through the air with whooshes and followed behind the dagger. They glowed brightly.

The Yellow Paper Umbrella in his left hand swayed gently, as if it was cheering or giving blessings.

The dagger drew a perfectly straight line in the gloomy sky.

Ten thousand swords followed closely behind it, and turned into a thin band around ten li in length.

The ten thousand swords arrived high in the sky. Rays of light poured out from the edge of the wings of the Golden-winged Great Peng, and landed on them.

The ten thousand swords reflected the light, and constantly flickered with radiance, as if they were scales.

The ten thousand swords were ten thousand scales, and connected in the sky. Directly in front of them was the dagger.

The dagger gave off an unimaginable pressure and radiance.

Faintly, in the sacred light, it seemed as though a golden dragon head had appeared.

It was the head of a Golden Dragon. Its dragon whiskers floated, and cut through the long sky.

# Chapter 339 - Fusing As One

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A golden dragon appeared in the night sky. A dragon roar burst through the night sky. A dragon breath crushed the entire grassland flat.

Countless monsters lay on the ground submissively, trembling but not daring to move. Even the strongest and proudest Mountain-toppling Fiend was as such. Any of the monsters that attempted to raise their heads and look were turned into a smear of blood in the next moment. As for the dragon serpents that were fortunate enough to survive the battle, they spasmed across their body, as if they would commit suicide by twisting themselves into segments to express devotion.

This was because it was a dragon. It was an existence that was greater than the Golden-winged Great Peng. It was an existence at the apex, that approached godhood.

The two sacred flames in the eyes of the Golden-winged Great Peng remained violent and abnormally solitary. It looked at the Golden Dragon that flew from the mausoleum and exploded with a powerful intent to battle. In its eyes appeared a defiance of the dazzling light. Its life was given for challenging the authority of dragons and phoenixes, so how could it be afraid of the pressure from the golden dragon? Also... for ten thousand swords to form a dragon, was it really a true dragon?

With a brutal whoosh that sliced through the sky, the Golden-Winged Great Peng pierced through the sky towards the mausoleum. The sky across the entire grassland had been shaken

to the point that it slightly distorted. With its two claws extended, several dozens of li of the ground of the grassland seemed to have been picked up by it. It wanted to use the two claws that ripped through the sky and earth to pierce the head of the golden dragon.

The Golden Dragon formed by the ten thousand swords rushed through the sky. The eyes of the dragon were indifferent. They were prideful and cold. The dragon whiskers danced, shattering the lightning high up in the sky into countless pieces. It had an extreme, unrivalled pressure and light, but what was very mystical was that the dragon breath actually contained an extremely frigid coldness. With just a moment, it began to snow heavily around the surroundings of the mausoleum.

In that moment, the sacred flames in the Gold-winged Great Peng's eyes suddenly began to flicker, because of the extremely frigid coldness from the dragon breath. However, it was also because it had suddenly discovered a shocking truth—the dragon formed from the ten thousand swords was actually a true dragon, and even more frighteningly, the dragon actually contained two dragon auras, the Golden Dragon and the Black Frost Dragon. They were the two strongest, proudest, most sacred huge dragons, and at the same time, they were the two existences least able to coexist amongst the dragon race. They had actually perfectly fused as one in the sword dragon.

At this moment, the dragon formed from the ten thousand swords was actually even stronger than the Golden Dragon and the Black Frost Dragon.

The Golden Dragon and the Golden-winged Great Peng met at an

high altitude, in the snow storm.

An angry and unwilling sound of lament and a roar that carried some pain resounded in the sky.

The right claw of the Gold-winged Great Peng was immediately crushed. A rift was forcefully cut into the huge shadow cast into the sky by the dragon formed from the ten thousand swords.

An extremely terrifying wound was also ripped open by the claws of the great peng on the body of the golden dragon.

The countless rays of light swayed restlessly. Fresh blood flowed violently out of the Golden-winged Great Peng, which transformed into golden nectar that burned violently as it fell on the grassland. It burned thousands of monsters to death, and closely afterwards, it transformed into great gusts of wind, wreaking havoc everywhere. It lifted up a massive amount of soil.

The snowstorm and the streaking fire danced and interwove violently between the sky and the earth.

The Golden Dragon roared, and continue to rush at the Golden-winged Great Peng. Its mouth was wide open, as if it could swallow the whole world.

Bang!

A golden light flashed in the sky, and the color of the night

suddenly disappeared.

The grassland in front of the mausoleum collapsed. It formed an area with a perimeter of several dozen li, and was one thousand feet in depth.

Countless monsters died within it.

Grass and rocks shattered.

Even the few boulders at the highest point in the mausoleum fell. With a rumble that was like thunder, they rolled into the grassland. From everywhere came the sounds of the ripping of airflow, the creaking of the space barely holding up, the violent clashing of divine auras, and the miserable howls of monsters. This lasted until the final, violent dragon roar.

The dragon roar was so clear and distant that it seemed to originate from the ancient times, but it also seemed to be extremely new. It was incomparably prideful and overbearing.

The dragon formed from the ten thousand swords swallowed the world, and ate the Golden-winged Great Peng.

After an unknown amount of time, the snowstorm slowly subsided, and snowflakes fell slowly. The violent and confusing sounds also slowly disappeared, and the grassland finally recovered some peace. The tens of thousands of monsters that survived raised their heads with fear and worry. They only saw

that the sky was completely clear. Although there was falling snow, there were no clouds for the snow. The shadow that had covered the sky for a very long time had also disappeared from sight.

A very small black dot drifted down from high altitude, like a leaf. Only after a very long time did the black dot hit the ground. It gave off a very soft plop, and was extremely hard to detect when compared to the violent sounds from the great battle before.

The thing that fell from the sky was Nanke. She landed heavily on the ground, and spat out a lot of fresh blood. The area where she landed was directly in front of the mausoleum, at the start of the divine path.

Chen Changsheng looked at her. It was not done purposely, but it was naturally looking at her from above.

He knew that after defeating the Golden-winged Great Peng, the ten thousand swords were extremely beaten and in a bad condition, but there were always a few matters that needed to be finished.

He raised his arm, and pointed at Nanke on the divine path below. He said a few words silently in his heart.

The sky above the mausoleum suddenly began to glow bright again. With the dagger as the lead, the ten thousand swords twisted downwards, and were thrust towards Nanke.

It was still a dragon, but its color was slightly duller than before.

The Demon General couple stood in front of Nanke. They looked at each other, and saw the apology and determination in each other's eyes. Actually, when the Sword Pool had appeared before, when the ten thousand swords hovered around Chen Changsheng, they had already glanced at each other in the eyes. At that time, there was only apology and determination in their eyes. At that moment, they already vaguely knew that the Military Advisor's plan for the Garden of Zhou had completely failed. No matter how the Military Advisor calculated, no matter how strong Nanke was, or if there were any hidden strategies, they were all unable to handle the endless fortuitous encounters of this human teenager.

An existence that could not be fought. This was fate.

They felt that Chen Changsheng's fate was too good.

The reason why they had determination in their eyes was that at this moment, they needed to break through. Only by returning to their true strength could they obtain a chance. However, in the Garden of Zhou, once they regained their level of cultivation, it would mean death.

The ten thousand swords that formed a dragon arrived on the ground from the sky.

They stood in front of Nanke, and their Qi suddenly increased. It immediately became extremely terrifying, like a true mountain peak.

This was the strength of the peak level of the Star Condensation realm, although it was not called such in Xuelao City.

Black armor covered their body. From this moment, they were no longer an ordinary, middle-aged couple. They were no longer Teng Xiaoming and Liu Wan'er, but the twenty-third and twenty-fourth Demon Generals.

The ten thousand swords had arrived, and chopped at Nanke.

The Demon General couple stood in front of Nanke.

The dragon head breathed dragon breath, which brought an endless light.

In the light, nothing could be seen. Only sounds could be heard.

There were countless, concentrated screeches. They were the sounds of the swords grinding and cutting into the armor, the metal pole and the metal pot.

The so-called dragon breath was the edge of the sword.

After an unknown amount of time, the Golden Dragon gave out a long roar that carried an almost unknown meaning. It had completed its attack, and turned around to return to the mausoleum.

Teng Xiaoming and Liu Wan'er stood in front of Nanke and looked at each other quietly.

Their black armor was already broken, and their bodies which were tough like stone were covered in sword wounds.

Tang Xiaoming looked at her, and said serenely, “Sorry, I won’t be able to go back to your homeland to farm and see the sun set.”

Liu Wan'er said, “I should be the one apologizing. If it wasn’t me who had to want to go home, then we should still be at the front line at the moment, and we wouldn’t be killed by a dragon for some reason.”

Teng Xiaoming did not say anything.

Liu Wan'er said, “The sunset at the hometown is much better looking than the sun here. But after looking at it too much, anyone will get tired of it.”

Teng Xiaoming said, “Yes, the scene where the ten thousand swords formed the dragon earlier was very nice.”

As soon as they finished talking, several streaks of lightning descended from the sky.

To help Nanke block the violent blow of the dragon formed from

the ten thousand swords, the Demon General couple simultaneously raised their cultivations to the peak level of Star Condensation. The rules of the Garden of Zhou sensed it, and naturally it began its attack. They did not avoid it, because they were already dead. In order to block the dragon, they had used the Great Art of Body Release. They were destined to die.

The lightning fell senselessly and without stopping.

The ten thousand swords returned to the mausoleum. In the streak of light, Chen Changsheng extended his hand and grasped the dagger.

However, the ten thousand swords did not disperse. They continued to surge towards him, as if bent on killing him.

The countless swords whistled as they arrived.

He subconsciously closed his eyes.

In the next moment, the whistling of the swords disappeared, and silence descended.

He opened his eyes again, and the ten thousand swords had already disappeared.

Only the dagger remained in his hand.

# Chapter 340 - The Blue Sky

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The wretched howls of the monsters gradually died down and a calm returned to the Plains of the Unsetting Sun. However, occasionally a thunderclap would resound from high in the sky. This thunder held an energy that didn't know where to land. Fortunately, this energy dissipated in the sky, constantly shaking the clouds and causing them to incessantly scatter.

Holding the dagger, Chen Changsheng walked upon the divine path, With each step he took, he would create a splash around his feet and a dense network of sword scars would appear on the gray stone, an indication of sword intent accidentally flowing out. He gazed down the divine path and saw that Nanke was already awake. Her two maids were unconscious behind her, but still alive.

Nanke was covered all over with blood. Sitting in the water, her face was abnormally pale; her slightly wide forehead especially was so deathly pale that it seemed transparent. Her divine soul had been fused with the Great Peng and suffered severe injury from those ten thousand swords-turned-dragon. She gazed at Chen Changsheng, her expression mystified. She simply could not make any sense of this. Why did the Sword Pool help this human youth? And what was up with that dragon? How could it possess the dragon aura of both the Golden Dragon and the Black Frost Dragon? If it were Xu Yourong, she might have been able to accept this defeat. Xu Yourong was a phoenix after all. The phoenix naturally held a sort of advantage over the Golden-winged Great Peng. Yet how could Chen Changsheng do so? The dragon... shouldn't it be Qiushan Jun?

Her perplexity only lasted for a moment. She very quickly cleared

her mind and somewhat strenuously lifted her hand. With the back of her hand, she wiped off the blood at the corner of her lips, then said to him impassively, "You think that this means you can just leave the Garden of Zhou? This sort of thinking is a disrespect to the grand spirit of this mausoleum."

Chen Changsheng thought, the plain has already been destroyed to this extent and the Sword Pool no longer exists, and you want to talk about respect? He did not answer this question because he was not skilled at conversation. In today's battle, twice when he had been asked a similar question, he did not use words to answer, but rather used his swords to reply.

"You will still die in this plain," Nanke said. "We will all die here."

Chen Changsheng did not understand why she said these sorts of words. Was she hoping to fight for a little time before the moment of death and hope that a miracle occurred? Nanke saw through his expression that he didn't understand why she was doing this. She asked derisively, "Could it be that you never thought about why the Sword Pool existed in the Garden of Zhou?"

He stood on the divine path and gazed at the vast and boundless plain. Of course he had thought about this question. Many people thought of the Sword Pool as a burial offering to Zhou Dufu, a silent monument that he had established himself. However, after walking through this plain and experiencing this battle that had shaken him to his core, how could he still think about this matter so simply?

Ever since he was born, Zhou Dufu had engaged in countless

battles, so many that the common people even said that he was so addicted to battle that he had gone mad. But maybe he was not a madman. If he was pursuing the Heavenly Dao, then opponents like the Demon Lord, Chen Xuanba, and the sect master of the Mount Li Sword Sect were fine, but it was very obvious that many of his opponents were not worthy of being his opponents. Moreover, why did he require that every defeated adversary needed to leave their swords behind in the plains? And these swords were unable to leave the plains, so just what was keeping them there?

"Without knowing a thing, you went ahead and did this. In addition... you actually managed to succeed. I don't know whether to say that your fate is good or that you're stupid." Nanke looked at him, her expression complex and hard to understand whether it was one of pity or ridicule.

Before that Demon General couple had resigned themselves to death, they had once felt a similar sorrow. They felt that Chen Changsheng's fate was too good. Yet Chen Changsheng knew very clearly that his fate was bad. Then if what Nanke said was true, what he had done was stupid? He did not know what to say.

Ever since she had entered the Garden of Zhou, Nanke had never laughed once. Even in Xuelao City, she very rarely laughed. Now she began to happily laugh, her smiling expression innocent and guiltless, but her eyes were extremely vicious. She was just like a small child that had succeeded at some mischief. "After doing so many things, after striving for so long, even burning up your own life to open up a path to survival, in the end you're still going to die. Everything that you've done is meaningless. Tell me, are you really depressed right now?"

Chen Changsheng had faintly sensed that what she said was true. There would most likely be something happening soon—although he did not understand what this was all about, he took the time to think about his answer before replying. "Although in a short time, we might all die in these plains, that's always better than... us dying and you living. Since it's like this, our efforts obviously have meaning."

His voice was somewhat exhausted and very calm, but it was capable of making people speechless.

However, in his heart there was a constant sound, as if it was urging him to leave.

In this assault on the mausoleum, countless monsters had died. Yet to this ocean-like monster tide, it was only a small portion. One could imagine from this the numbers and battle strength the monsters possessed, but... these monsters were not meant to suppress the Sword Pool, but to guard the mausoleum.

Everything had its purpose, and in the Garden of Zhou, this was even more so. The monsters were Zhou Dufu's method of keeping humans and demons away from his mausoleum. Then why did he need to leave these ten thousand broken swords in the Garden of Zhou and bury them in those pools of water? And what was he using to keep those swords around the mausoleum?

Chen Changsheng had no answer, and neither did Nanke.

Before she had entered the Garden of Zhou, her teacher had warned her that there was a mysterious force in the plain that was restricting the Sword Pool. Simultaneously, the Sword Pool was restricting that mysterious force. The two had reached an equilibrium of sorts, thus ensuring the continued existence of the plain. So her teacher had warned her that after she entered the Garden of Zhou, she should not try to find the Sword Pool, and even if she did find it, she should not do anything about it.

So once she had entered the Garden of Zhou, she had not hesitated to let Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong flee for such a long time so that she could find the Mausoleum of Zhou, and did not display the slightest interest towards the Sword Pool. Yet the Sword Pool had still been discovered. Originally, the plains were a Sword Sea. Then the ten thousand swords had been summoned out of the Sword Pool by Chen Changsheng. From that moment on, she understood that the balance of the Plains of the Unsetting Sun had been disrupted, that something big would happen in the Garden of Zhou, that it might even be destroyed. To stop all this from happening, she had expended an enormous effort. Sadly, she had still lost in the end.

But just what was that mysterious force?

Chen Changsheng gazed deep into the plain. He didn't see anything, so he turned around instead of continuing down the divine path. Nanke and her two maids were already crippled, unable to stop him from leaving. The previous scene of the Demon General couple dying to the ten thousand sword glows as they gazed into each other's eyes made him feel rather tired. Moreover, he had to make the best use of his time.

Walking to the corner of the main entrance, he extended his hand to support Xu Yourong, preparing to take her away. Yet just when his hand was only a few inches from her shoulder, it suddenly went stiff in the chilly wind. After a moment, he slowly stood back up and turned around to gaze at the plain.

From the plain came the bitter sound of weeping, just like the leaf flutes the elves used to play.

It was the weeping of that heavily injured Earth Monkey. Amidst the foul water, bits of grass, and monster corpses, it hugged the thick leg of the Mountain-toppling Fiend as it cried in sorrow. Just what was this sinister, crafty, and even frightening high-ranked monster weeping about? The previous battle between the ten thousand swords-turned-dragon and the Golden-winged Great Peng had spread out to the surrounding plain. The body of the Mountain-toppling Fiend had incurred even more gruesome wounds, but it was still ranked third on the Ranking of Earthly Beasts. It could clearly hold on and was not going to die, so what was the Earth Monkey crying about? Was it mourning its own severed leg?

Chen Changsheng did not know why, but he felt his body get a little colder. Because the Earth Monkey's weeping was very miserable, hearing it made one feel heartbroken and want to cry as well. It was extremely terrifying. As the Earth Monkey's weeping resounded through the plains, more and more monsters began to howl in pain. These low-ranked monsters did not know how to cry. Their sorrowful howls and moist eyes were their way of crying.

Nanke closed her eyes. She was waiting for death. She was not

waiting for Chen Changsheng to come kill her, but for the Garden of Zhou to be destroyed.

Chen Changsheng silently gazed at the plains. The sky had once again grown clear. It was early morning and the sky was blue. The thunder had gradually died down and everything was serene.

Only the sorrowful cries of the monsters insistently reminded him that destruction was coming. It was too late now.

There was nothing strange about the plains, but in his eyes, they seemed to have grown lighter. He could faintly sense that there had occurred some sort of change that he could not comprehend.

The sort of feeling might have come from the fact that he had taken away all the swords in this plain.

The plains grew lighter, the sky turned blue, and the light grew clearer.

A clear light rose up from some place in the front of the mausoleum and crossed countless li before finally resting on the blue sky.

It did so without a sound, as if nothing had happened at all. It was like a drop of ink landing in a bowl of clear water.

As ink enters the water, it seems very warm and gentle. In reality, in the next moment, that entire bowl of clear water will all

have turned black.

The blue sky suddenly became dull, or perhaps became clearer.

As time passed, the color of the sky grew increasingly dull. This dullness was actually transparency—it was brightness.

In that place where the clear light disappeared, in that bright and transparent sky, a piece suddenly dropped down.

It was a piece of sky.

The piece of sky slowly drifted down to the ground.

Chen Changsheng stared at it, his face growing increasingly pale.

All the monsters lifted their heads and gazed at the piece of sky. They had stopped their mournful howls, leaving only a deathly silence.

The piece of sky floated down very slowly, just like an actual fallen leaf. It seemed like it could be avoided, but the monster ocean on the surface of the plain did not seem like they were going to move.

The Garden of Zhou was their entire world. Now, their entire world was headed towards destruction. Just where would they flee to?

All around the mausoleum was silence. Only the Earth Monkey continued its mournful sobbing.

No matter how that Mountain-toppling Fiend gently stroked its head, nothing could stop its moaning.

It and its companions had lived in this plain for countless years. Now, this plain was finally about to meet its end. It and its companions had guarded this mausoleum for several hundred years, but still they had failed to protect it. How could this not make them angry, make them fearful, make them despair, make them suffer?

The Earth Monkey's mournful cries echoed through the deathly silent plain. It rose up and down along with the descent of the piece of sky, like an infinitely mournful song.

# Chapter 341 - The Genuine Relics Of The Garden Of Zhou

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The so-called sky was the edge of the space. It did not have weight, so its fragments were naturally lighter than the lightest leaf. The fragment fell gently towards the grassland, sometimes in the east, and sometimes appearing in the west hundreds of li away. It was impossible to estimate its trajectory at all.

After an unknown amount of time, under the attention of countless terrified gazes of despair, the fragment of the sky finally landed. It may have been on purpose, or it may have been accidental, but it landed perfectly on the mountainous Monster Bull. Immediately, the fragment transformed into extremely dazzling white flames, which gave off an endless amount of light and heat. The Monster Bull gave out a moo of grief and indignation, and disappeared into the white flames. Nothing remained of it, not even ash or smoke.

The grassland shook violently. In a radius of several li, the monsters all fell onto the ground one after another. The monsters that stuck to the ground, like the dragon serpents, were shaken even more, shaken to the point where they vomited blood and died. The shaking spread to the area around the mausoleum, and the cracks between the huge rocks and gray stones spat out a lot of dust.

The two maids, Ning Qiu and Hua Cui, were shaken awake. They could feel the terrifying explosion of energy in the distance. Their terrified faces were pale, and they did not know what was happening. Nanke closed her eyes, and felt the crack in the blue

sky. She vaguely understood something, and mumbled, “So it was like that.”

Things that were already happening could not be changed. What had to be done was to find the cause of the matter. Chen Changsheng quickly retracted his gaze, and looked at the origin of the clear light that had shot into the sky. He discovered that the clear light had been emitted by a stone pillar in front of the mausoleum.

In the surroundings of the mausoleum, there were ten stone pillars that were similar in shape. Yesterday, when he and Xu Yourong had arrived in the mausoleum, they noticed the stone pillars—the stone pillars were around several dozen feet in height, and some patterns with unclear meanings were carved on the surface. With the erosion of time, wind and rain, the patterns had become very blurry, making it even more impossible to understand their meanings.

He had noticed the ten unremarkable stone pillars because they made him think of the stone pillars outside the Li Palace. It was also because when the stone pillars were compared to the grand mausoleum, they seemed overly shabby and unpresentable, giving off a very strong feeling of dissonance. They seemed to not be qualified for the mausoleum, and were not an integral whole with it at all. Looking at it now, the ten stone pillars that seemed to be unremarkable were indeed unusual. Such terrifying power was actually hidden within a stone pillar, and the clear light that it had given off was able to shatter and pull off a fragment of the sky.

The fragment of the sky transformed the strong Monster Bull

into nothing, and at the same time, it disappeared. The grassland became peaceful again, or in other words, deathly silent. No matter if it was Chen Changsheng, the two maids or the countless monsters, they could only stare at the stone pillar. There was an indescribable sense of nervousness and restlessness.

Suddenly, a layer of rock fell from the surface of the stone pillar. The layer of rock was around several fingers thick and several inches wide. It shattered into many pieces when it landed on the gray stone ground, giving off a soft smash. The sound was very soft, but it seemed very hair-raising in the deathly silent grassland. The monster tide began to surge, and it was unknown how many monsters had been frightened and had fallen into the water plants.

A while later, another Qi pierced through the surface of the stone pillar. It transformed into a clear light, and left the mausoleum without a sound.

At that moment, Chen Changsheng felt it. It was an extremely ancient Qi that was paramount without equal.

The Qi was even older than the continent.

Just what were the stone pillars?

This time, the clear light did not fly towards the blue sky, and instead floated in a tilted and very casual manner towards the edge of the grassland. It was not known where it would fly to before stopping. Countless terrified gazes focused on the clear light, as if they were following it with their eyes. They saw the clear light fly

over a thousand li away, and were no longer able to see where it was clearly.

After a very long time, there was a muffled sound of collision and a clear rumble. It had originated from the edge of the grassland over a thousand li away, and spread to the surroundings of the mausoleum. Because of the great distance, the muffled sound was not clear. However, the tremble remained as violent, causing countless water plants to fly up, and the mausoleum to be cloaked in dusk once again.

The powerful tremble caused Chen Changsheng to stumble. However, his gaze was steady, and remained focused on the stone pillar. He noticed that another layer of rock had fallen.

The stone pillar had experienced the effects of wind and rain, so its surface was extremely rough. The color was dark gray, and it seemed like ordinary stone. After the two layers of rock fell off from in front and behind it, the inner part of the stone pillar was revealed. Under the bright sunlight, it could be seen extremely clearly that it was... black.

The Qi from inside the stone pillar continued to pass through the surface and disperse outwards. It turned into rays of clear light, and danced above the grassland. It would sometimes land on the sky high up, sometimes on the faraway edge of the grassland, or sometimes on the ground not far away from the mausoleum. It would rip the sky, flip the earth and bring terrifying explosions.

The rays of clear light contained an extremely terrifying power. It was unblockable, even if Chen Changsheng had ten thousand

swords with him. This was because the Qi that came out of the stone pillars had already far exceeded what he could understand. It was a power that was not recorded in the Daoist Canon.

The world shook. The violent energy exploded and enveloped the entire Plains of the Unsetting Sun. Although it could not be seen, it could be imagined that the rest of the Garden of Zhou was also in such a situation.

With the appearance of the rays of clear light, the layers of rock on the stone pillar constantly fell off, shattering under the stone pillar. It revealed more and more of the true appearance of the pillar. It was still stone inside the pillar, but the color was black. It seemed like a patch of mottling, like a book of rubbings that were not done well.

Looking at the mottled surface of the stone pillar and the black stone that was revealed underneath, Chen Changsheng felt that it was rather familiar for some reason.

Thinking of a certain possibility, the knuckles of his hand that held onto the dagger hilt paled slightly. His body trembled gently, and his lips were abnormally dry. Before, when he faced up against the Golden-winged Great Peng, he was daring enough to fight it with the dagger in hand, but now, seeing the stone pillars, he seemed to have even lost the courage to draw his dagger.

Full of shock, he thought in his heart... impossible.

The stone pillar continued to give off clear light. The layers of

rock continued to fall off without stopping, revealing more and more of the black that was inside.

The explosions of the violent energies finally met, which turned into countless terrifying whirlwinds. They began to blow violently and wreak havoc in the grassland.

Most of the shaking from the surrounding Garden of Zhou traveled to the mausoleum, and reached his feet.

What was even more terrifying was that the remaining nine stone pillars surrounding the mausoleum also began to tremble slightly. Layers of rock fell off the stone pillars with cracking sounds, and the terrifying Qi was about to appear.

Chen Changsheng held onto the dagger hilt. He knew what he should do, but he did not know how he could do it. He felt slightly absent-minded.

The hilt trembled gently.

As it turned out, the ten thousand broken swords were used to suppress the stone pillars. More correctly, they were used to temporarily seal the Qi in the stone pillars.

Now, the Sword Sea had been taken by him, so the objects hidden in the ten stone pillars were about to appear.

Just what were the stone pillars?

Chen Changsheng already guessed it, but he did not dare to believe it. He did not want to believe it.

However, it had already truly happened.

A large portion of the layer of rock had already fallen off the stone pillars.

A square-shaped black stone slowly appeared before the world.

It stood tall and upright between the heavens and the earth.

Although there were still a lot of leftover layers of rock on the surface of the black stones, complicated lines that were barely comprehensible could already be seen.

Chen Changsheng obviously felt that it was familiar. It was impossible for any person who had stared at it for so many days to not find it familiar.

In a mausoleum in the south of the capital, he had once seen many objects that were similar to the black stones.

There were countless lines on the surface of the black stone. The lines were patterning and texts. With texts carved onto the square stone, it was naturally a monolith.

As it turned out, the black stones were monoliths.

Black stone monoliths.

Heavenly Tome Monoliths.

# Chapter 342 - The Lost Stone Monoliths And The Powerless Girl

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Countless years ago, when the Heavenly Tomes descended in rolling flames, they landed in the current south of the capital. There, the mausoleum mound formed, and it became the Mausoleum of Books. Countless stone monoliths were scattered on it, and joined with the earth. It could not be separated at all, and could not be moved. Neither the Daoist Canon nor the books of history held any recordings of the stone monoliths leaving the Mausoleum of Books. As a result, when Chen Changsheng took one day to comprehend all seventeen Heavenly Tome Monoliths of the front mausoleum and saw the broken monolith in the final monolith hut, he thought with shock, just who was it that was actually able to break the monolith and take it away?

Now, only after seeing the stone pillar outside the mausoleum that gave off clear light and constantly shed layers of rock did he understand that the monolith that had left the Mausoleum of Books was in the stone pillar. If so, then the person who had broken the monolith and taken it away was Zhou Dufu. Fair enough—other than Zhou Dufu, who else in the world could do such things that could offend the entire world? He looked at the other nine stone pillars around the mausoleum, and his body became stiffer and stiffer. If those stone pillars were also Heavenly Tome Monoliths, did that not mean that Zhou Dufu had taken ten monoliths out of the Mausoleum of Books at that time?

As it turned out, this was the greatest secret of the Garden of Zhou.

No matter if it was the legacies that were left behind by experts of previous generations, or even the Sword Pool or Zhou Dufu's Halving Blade Technique, no other secret could be compared to the secret in the stone pillars.

Just when he thought about the matter in shock, the other nine stone pillars also began to exude the Qi that seemed to originate from ancient times, and clear light began shining out of them.

The clear light landed on the sky, and it shattered the sky into fragments. The fragments landed on the grassland, and exploded into storms of unimaginable energy. It caused the world to change color, and the whirlwinds that wreaked havoc on the grassland to become more and more terrifying. They had even lifted up the monsters that were heavy like mountains and the boulders beneath the wet mud. The shaking of the earth became more and more powerful, and there were no longer any more monsters that could stand. They all fell on the ground in succession. The Monster Birds that had some resistance by flying in the sky were unable to leave the grassland in time at all. They were blown away by countless streams of air. Whether they had died or were still alive could not be known.

The grassland and the world of the Garden of Zhou which was slightly further out fell into complete disorder, and was about to be destroyed. Even the grand mausoleum began to tremble, and some boulders were completely smashed by the storm of energy. They turned into heavy rocks, which began to roll down from high above. The rockslide gave off a rumbling like thunder, and squashed many monsters that were unable to avoid it to death.

The whirlwinds arrived at the mausoleum. Nanke's eyes were closed, and she waited for death in the violent wind. She was immediately swept away, and drifted towards the grassland behind her. The two maids, Ning Qiu and Hua Cui, gave out calls of lamentation, and burned their spiritual bodies as if their lives depended on it. They transformed into two spiritual lights and arrived by her side, immediately transformed into wings of light, which attached to Nanke's body.

The whistling, violent wind swept Nanke into the distance. The wings of light quickly turned into smears of light, and disappeared with the blink of an eye. Seeing this, Chen Changsheng calmed down, and used the Yeshi Step to break through the tearing of the violent wind. He returned to the main entrance of the mausoleum. He used the dagger in his left hand to pierce into the heavy stone door, and used his right hand to reach towards Xu Yourong.

He was prepared to untie Xu Yourong's waist band, and bind her to himself.

Xu Yourong woke up. She looked at the frenetic grassland, and her expression became slightly perplexed. However, when she saw the clear light that came out of the ten stone pillars before the mausoleum, she worked out everything very quickly. Her complexion became abnormally pale, and she murmured, "It indeed is him who put it in the Garden of Zhou."

A ray of clear light landed at a location not far away from the main entrance of the mausoleum. The divine path crumbled, and brought with it a series of violent quakes.

Chen Changsheng was jolted and hit the stone wall. His right hand grasped the dagger hilt tightly, which was why he did not get blown away by the whirlwinds. However, he was unable to grab her.

The Tong Bow in Xu Yourong's hand swayed in the incoming wind, and turned into a wutong tree that was covered in verdant, green leaves. The tree roots were attached tightly to the stone wall, which helped her stabilise herself.

In the wild, whistling wind, the green leaves fell one by one. Her black hair floated past her pale face and slightly absent-minded eyes.

Chen Changsheng looked at her and shouted, “How can I make it stop?”

Ever since entering the grassland, he was used to listening to her opinions. He knew what kind of intelligence and knowledge she had, and he had also vaguely heard the words she had just spoken. Although, he did not understand why she understood this matter so well that she only needed a glance to know what was happening.

At the Holy Maiden Peak, Xu Yourong had spent all her time studying the Heavenly Tomes. She was also extremely close with the Divine Empress, which was why she knew the secret that almost no-one knew. Looking at the ten stone pillars, she was as shocked as she possibly could be, and only returned to her senses a while later. She muttered to herself, "...there's still two missing."

Back then, Zhou Dufu broke off twelve Heavenly Tome Monoliths in the Mausoleum of Books. There were only ten monoliths surrounding the mausoleum, so where were the other two? Even at such an intense moment, she who spent all her time with the meaning of the Heavenly Tomes subconsciously thought of this question first, before finally hearing Chen Changsheng's voice.

Her finger quickly drew on the floor, calculating the relative position of the ten pillars in the surroundings of the mausoleum and deducing the connections between the stone pillars. Originally, she was already extremely weak and spent all the time sleeping. As soon as she woke up, she began to do such complicated calculations, so she expended an extremely great amount of energy. In just a moment, her complexion became pale like snow.

The violent wind blew the pieces of rock that landed on the mausoleum, which gave out an extremely terrifying sound. Countless holes immediately formed in the tough rock, and even the wutong tree transformed from the Tong Bow began to totter. The green leaves constantly fell, and it seemed about to collapse. Seeing this, Chen Changsheng did not think at all, and took the risk of drawing the dagger from the wall. With difficulty, he moved to Xu Yourong's side, and opened up the Yellow Paper Umbrella, helping her to block the rock shrapnel that was like arrows.

The Yellow Paper Umbrella constantly gave out thick and disorderly sounds of being hit.

In the next moment when the Yellow Paper Umbrella became

quiet, Chen Changsheng did not say anything. He did not want to interrupt her calculations.

After an unknown amount of time, Xu Yourong shook her head and said, “Can’t calculate it.”

Chen Changsheng peered over the edge of the Yellow Paper Umbrella, and his gaze landed on the stone pillar in front of the mausoleum. He said, “There always should be a method.”

It was not blind hope, but stubborn belief. Since Zhou Dufu could suppress the Heavenly Tome Monoliths before, they definitely could also do it. Their current level of cultivation obviously could not be compared to Zhou Dufu from before in the slightest, but the method should have been there, waiting to be discovered by them.

“The relative positions and mutual relations of the ten stone pillars are rather subtle. It should be a type of formation that can equalise the surge of Qi between the stone pillars and form a type of balance. Logically, it should not be as violent as it is now. I can’t calculate what has gone wrong.”

At the moment, Xu Yourong was very weak. However, when she said that, she actually revealed a glimpse of frustration that was rarely ever seen.

Chen Changsheng said, “Before, it should have been the Sword Pool that was responsible for suppressing and balancing, but now, I have taken away the Sword Pool. If I return the ten thousand swords right now, will it still be of any use?”

Without too much exact detail, Xu Yourong understood what had happened when she was asleep before through his few, simple sentences. Before she could feel the astonishment, she began to deduce and calculate once again. However, even after adding in the variable of the Sword Pool, she realised that the matter still did not make sense.

If they wanted the stone pillars to settle down, the great formation to regain its function and allow the world to be balanced again... they needed even more Heavenly Tome Monoliths.

However, where could she find Heavenly Tome Monoliths? Who knew where the remaining two monoliths of the twelve that Zhou Dufu had taken out of the Mausoleum of Books back then were? Also, even if the two Heavenly Tome Monoliths were found, the world of the Garden of Zhou was currently falling apart, so just who could stop the sky from falling down?

As a result, it was useless.

No matter if the Sword Pool appeared again, or if the stone pillars settled down once again, it was already useless.

The Garden of Zhou was about to be destroyed, and the humans, demons and monsters within it would be turned to ashes, or sucked into void space.

Xu Yourong lowered her head and looked at her finger that trembled slightly. Her lips were tightly pursed. She seemed a

staunch and unyielding girl who was currently grieving.

She felt that she was very useless.

Chen Changsheng understood it, and did not say any more. At this moment, he held the dagger in one hand and the umbrella in the other, and could not pat her shoulder to comfort her, much less hug her to give her warmth. As a result, he could only move slightly towards her, and sit closer to her. His shoulder leaned on hers gently, hoping that it could give her something to rely on.

The whirlwind sucked up countless rock fragments which rained on the surface of the Yellow Paper Umbrella. It brought an extremely terrifying vibration of sound, like that of a giant beating a battle drum. If the defensive capabilities of the Yellow Paper Umbrella were not so great, they would already be dead at that moment.

It was very quiet in the umbrella.

Xu Yourong leaned on his shoulder, and seemed very powerless.

# Chapter 343 - Where Does The Rainbow Come From?

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The monster tide was like an ocean and that shadow obscured the sky, but Zhexiu carried Qi Jian and continuously ran off in the exact opposite direction. Qi Jian maintained her weak consciousness and pointed the way, correcting him on occasion when he began straying from the right direction. However, both time and space in this plain were problematic. No matter how fast Zhexiu ran, he still could not escape this plain. For this reason, after he had made a little distance between them and that shadow, he stopped and took a small rest. At the same time, he began to consider what he should do next. It was just at this moment that countless sword glows appeared in the sky—just like this, the Sword Sea appeared in the plain behind them.

When Qi Jian, who was resting on his shoulder, saw this scene, she was stunned into silence and her body became extremely rigid.

"What happened?" Zhexiu asked.

Qi Jian's voice was somewhat shaky as she replied, "It seems... it seems like the Sword Pool has appeared."

Zhexiu was quiet, then said, "Continue."

The battle on the plain between the monster tide and the myriad swords did not affect they who were so far away. That magnificent and momentous battle, through Qi Jian's monotonous voice, became much more tedious, but Zhexiu still listened attentively,

because he knew that this strange activity might be the last chance the pair had to escape this plain. Finally, when Qi Jian described how those myriad swords had flown up into the sky for the final time and transformed into a golden dragon and engulfed the Golden-winged Great Peng, he accurately grasped an important fact.

"The sword at the very front...was a dagger?"

Qi Jian's injuries had not yet recovered. In the course of these many days of flight through this plain, she had grown extremely weak. If it were not for the fact that she needed to give Zhexiu directions, she would have dropped unconscious at any time. However, ever since she was a child, she had cultivated in the path of the sword, so her eyes were like two intelligent swords, able to get a crystal-clear view of things that were far away and describe them very definitively.

Hearing her words, Zhexiu immediately put her on his back and once again began to make his way in the opposite direction of that battle.

Qi Jian asked, "Did you recognize that sword?"

Zhexiu replied, "That was Chen Changsheng's dagger."

Qi Jian was confused. She asked in surprise, "It was Chen Changsheng? Then... shouldn't we go and help him?"

Previously, she had seen very clearly that although that dagger had led that legion of swords in victory over the Golden-winged Great Peng, it was very obviously on its last legs. If it really was Chen Changsheng that was battling with the demons in the plains, how could Zhexiu, as his companion, just leave him be?

Hearing her question, Zhexiu's feet actually began to move even faster as he answered. "If he can resolve that problem, he doesn't require our help. If he can't resolve it, it can only buy us some time. If this is the case, if we were to turn around, we would just be wasting the opportunity to survive that he found for us."

Qi Jian had grown up in the Mount Li Sword Sect and had grown accustomed to the mutual affection and assistance her fellow disciples provided to each other, never leaving each other behind, so she was unable to understand Zhexiu's way of thinking. Just as she was thinking of a rebuttal, Zhexiu flatly and emotionlessly continued, "If it was me fighting the demons and Chen Changsheng carrying Xu Yourong away, I am confident that he would also not turn back."

Qi Jian was still somewhat unwilling to accept these words, but she finally decided to remain silent. Because Zhexiu had said that Chen Changsheng would make the same choice and then had also compared himself and her to Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong, she did not know how to respond.

Zhexiu continued to run forward through the surrounding plain. Just at this moment, a clear light landed in the sky. Soon after, a piece of the sky fell down on the plains, followed by an explosion. They were suddenly assailed by a berserk gale, and then a fierce

shaking knocked them over into the grass.

Zhexiu laboriously stood up in the water and asked, "What's the situation?"

Qi Jian stared at the distant sky, her face pale as she said, "It seems... that the sky is falling."

Zhexiu quietly stood for a few moments, then carried her out of the grass and continued to run to the edge of the plain.

The sky truly was about to fall. Countless streams of frenzied energy engulfed the entire plain in a storm, then easily tore through the restrictions at the edge of the plain. As one got closer to the edge of the plain to access other areas of the Garden of Zhou, all around could be seen monstrous tears. It seemed like the edge of this world's destruction.

Zhexiu and Qi Jian were very fortunate. As they ran, none of those storms brought about by the clear light struck them. Even more fortunate was that the appearance of the Heavenly Tome Monolith had sent heaven and earth into chaos, dashing to pieces the restrictions around the plains. The different regions no longer ran on different times and the segmentation of space also disappeared.

Just like that, they ran. They ran out of the Plains of the Unsetting Sun and arrived below Sunset Valley.

It was still night in the Garden of Zhou. The sphere of light that distantly shined at Sunset Valley was no longer as calm and beautiful as it once was. The storms brought about by the appearance of the Heavenly Tomes had already reached this place. Massive rocks were falling from the cliffs of Sunset Valley, as if it had just been struck by a fearsome earthquake. And this earthquake was still going.

Suffering the pain from the wound on her abdomen and the effects of the medicine, Qi Jian fiercely clung to consciousness. Through the mountains scattered with fallen stones, she guided Zhexiu. Zhexiu once again transformed, his sharp claws digging into the earth, soaring, leaping, running, and plunging through the cliffs, time and time again narrowly avoiding a landslide. Finally, he arrived at one of the gardens at the edge of the Garden of Zhou.

As soon as Qi Jian saw a girl dressed in the ceremonial garb of the Thirteen Divisions of Radiant Green, that breath she had been holding for this entire time instantly was all let out. She could hold on no longer and instantly fell unconscious.

This was the Mountainside Whispering Wood, a place where the human cultivators had gathered. To Zhexiu, Chen Changsheng, and the others that had entered the Plains of the Unsetting Sun, several dozen days had passed. To these human cultivators, not that much time had passed. Of course, to them, the time that had gone by was already long enough.

Because of the demon's plot, the Garden of Zhou was thrown into complete mayhem. They wanted to leave, but they could not leave.

This time had been extremely unbearable for them. Now, that terrifying shaking coming from the plain and those even more frightening storms of energy had made them all feel that they were in mortal danger. The gardens in which they had gathered were thrown into disorder. Everywhere there were anxious and inquiring voices, and also many desperate cries. They did not know when the gate to the Garden of Zhou would open, nor did they know if the Garden of Zhou was about to be annihilated.

The Garden of Zhou was a miniature world with an extraordinarily complex construction. On the other side of the cliff was a very large region. The large lake in that place had already returned to its former serenity. The blood bled by Nanke's two maids had been washed away by the waters of the lake. The blood spilled by that treacherous sword that had pierced Qi Jian's abdomen had also been covered up by the sand.

Liang Xiaoxiao and Zhuang Huanyu stood at the lake shore. They did not look into each other's eyes nor speak to each other. They both had no expression on their faces, but they represented two completely different emotions. Gazing at the ominous red sky and feeling the vibrations from deep in the lake, Liang Xiaoxiao glanced at Zhuang Huanyu and said, "First live and get out, then we can talk about other things."

Outside Hanqiu City, the fog was still thick. Although it was night, the rainbow that came from far away was still as striking as ever. That last strand of disorder had long since disappeared, yet this occurrence had no means of going back in time and affecting what had caused that rainbow to disappear in the first place. The formless gate to the Garden of Zhou in the fog was still closed and it was unknown when it would open again.

Zhu Luo stood in the dark forest at the very front of the fog, staring at the rainbow in the fog. His expression was grave and stern as he thought about something.

As one of humanity's strongest experts, one of the Storms of the Eight Directions, not even he knew how many storms he had experienced. Whether it was cold winds and bitter rains or foul winds and bloody rains, an affair like this where the demons infiltrated the Garden of Zhou and cut off its connection to the outside world, while it could shock him somewhat, was truthfully not too big of a deal. Under his leadership, many of the priests of the Orthodoxy and experts of the Tianliang County were using various spells to repair the gate to the Garden of Zhou. Examining the degree to which the space within the fog was warped, he could tell that it would not be long until they met with success. And yet... just a moment ago, he had sensed that something terrible had occurred, that something had happened in the Garden of Zhou and that the garden was now on the verge of collapse.

An expert of his caliber possessed an extremely profound understanding of the laws of space and could tell when any miniature world was about to collapse or slide into oblivion. Even the Central Continent would disappear after tens of thousands of years, but... to construct and moreover use a miniature world inevitably required a relatively stable and firm space. The Pope's Green Leaf world was like this, and so was Zhou Dufu's world. In his view, the Garden of Zhou should have been able to stably exist for at least several tens of thousands of years. So why were there suddenly signs of its coming collapse?

No one could say that their strength was enough to destroy a

world, even a miniature one. He could not, the Pope could not, and the Zhou Dufu of the past also could not. A power that could destroy a world could only come from the world itself. If the Garden of Zhou was about to collapse, then the reason inevitably lay within the Garden of Zhou itself, or else some sort of power that surpassed space.

Zhu Luo thought of those rumors and his expression grew ever more grave, like a sheet of ice.

At some point, Mei Lisha had arrived at his side. The archbishop's elderly face was usually tired, but now there was only concern visible on his face. His eyes were still squinted, but only those people close by could clearly sense the chill exuded by his gaze.

With his hoarse voice, Mei Lisha asked, "How long until we can open the gate to the Garden of Zhou?"

Zhu Luo sent out his spiritual sense, using some profound method to sense the twisting of space within the fog. He then gave a relatively accurate estimate. "We should be able to open it before morning."

Mei Lisha squinted his eyes even harder. "No good, it's too slow."

Even in the face of this peerless expert of the Storms of the Eight Directions, his tone was still this direct, even oppressive.

Zhu Luo gazed at that rainbow that arose from somewhere in the south. "We've done everything that we can do. For it to be faster, we can only look at Mount Li."

Mei Lisha understood his meaning and gazed silently in the direction of that precipitous peak in the south. No one noticed that his robed hands were lightly trembling, and naturally no one could hear that virtuous and prestigious elder silently saying to himself: Chen Changsheng, you cannot die.

That rainbow that had arisen from the distance was not the key to the Garden of Zhou. To provide a more accurate description, that rainbow was an action taken by the key to open the Garden of Zhou. Black Robe was able to use the square plate to influence the rainbow and temporarily close the Garden of Zhou because in that instant when the key was about to enter the lock, he had inserted something extra into the lock.

From beginning to end, the key to the Garden of Zhou had been at Mount Li, in Mount Li's highest peak at its highest location in that cave. This was also where the rainbow came from. With a creak, the door to the cave was pushed open and a sagely elder walked out. His hand stroked the hilt of his sword and his two eyes were as placid as a lake, but this lake had a thousand swords within. This was the current sect master of the Mount Li Sword Sect.

# Chapter 344 - The Pheasant In Dire Straits

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Before the Garden of Zhou had opened, before the rainbow had appeared, Mount Li was already in a condition of absolute vigilance. Xiao Songgong and three elders of the Discipline Hall sat at various places along the mountain path, and the Myriad Sword Array of Mount Li was hidden in the depths of the clouds, ready to kill any enemies that appeared at any time. However, they were still unable to create absolute safety. Only when the Sect Master of Mount Li created a long whistle with his sword did the rainbow stabilize, as well as purge the other Qi from within the rainbow. Unfortunately, it could not stop the Demon race from closing the gate of the Garden of Zhou in time.

If they wanted to open the gate of the Garden of Zhou again and let the several hundred human cultivators out, other than the formations deployed by the many experts outside Hanqiu City, what was most important was still the rainbow that originated from Mount Li. After all, the key was there. In the time that had passed, Mount Li remained in silence. Everyone focused their attention on the activity on the main peak. At that moment when they saw the sect master finally exit the dwelling, all the people that had waited for a very long time surged forwards, bowing and saluting. Xiao Songgong asked with a serious expression, “Senior, how is it?”

The Mount Li Sect Master gazed into the eastern night sky, and looked at the star that remained bright. He said, “At dawn, the Garden of Zhou will reopen.”

Hearing that, Xiao Songgong relaxed a little. However, he discovered that the Sect Master remained stern in expression,

especially in the silent lake in his eyes, and his sword intent seemed to move slightly. Xiao Songgong could not help but feel extremely uneasy and asked, “Perhaps there are other changes?”

The Mount Li Sect Master retracted his gaze to the east, and followed the rainbow until it landed on the position of Hanqiu City in the north. He said, “There are great matters currently occurring in the Garden of Zhou, and there are already signs of collapsing. I don’t know if the people inside are still able to last till dawn.”

The Mount Li Sword Sect Disciples present heard what he said, and felt shocked. However, they did not dare to create a hubbub. After a while, an elder of the Discipline Hall asked in concern, “Are there any other methods?”

The Sect Master did not say anything, and the people naturally understood what he meant. A disciple asked, “How is Eldest Brother?”

With his question, many disciples shot their gaze towards the tightly-shut door of the dwelling. To the younger generation of Mount Li disciples, it seemed that nothing could pose a problem to their Eldest Brother. Although they knew that his level of cultivation definitely was not as great as their martial uncles, they still subconsciously placed hope on him.

The Sect Master looked at all the disciples and said, “In order to quickly reopen the gate of the Garden of Zhou, your Eldest Brother has basically burnt all of the blood of the True Dragon in his body, and you want it to open even faster? Perhaps you wish for him to completely cripple his cultivation? Or is it that you want him to

just die under this rainbow?”

Hearing this, the disciples were all surprised, and did not dare to say any more.

Just at this moment, a voice resounded from inside the dwelling, “Master, disciple... still wants to try again.”

The voice was very exhausted, and seemed extremely weak. However, it remained as clear as it was normally and extremely pleasant to the ear. The emotions in the voice was still very calm, unhurried, confident and resolute. More importantly, the voice was just like how it was normally; no matter what situation it was in, it would not sound depressed, and carried a feeling of being free and at ease, or even being carefree and unrestrained.

Hearing the voice, all the disciples felt slightly relieved for some reason, just like how it was normally.

The Sect Master looked at the dwelling and said with a deep voice, “If you want to try again, perhaps there is only death.”

The voice disappeared for a while, and then resounded once again. It remained calm and extremely resolute. “Junior Sister is still in the Garden of Zhou.”

This was an excuse. This was a reason. It was an excuse and reason that everybody in the world was willing to know and believe. When the Sect Master heard the seemingly calm voice of

the Eldest Disciple who he loved the most dearly give off a truly worried feeling for the first time, how could he have the heart to stop him?

In the depths of the Plains of the Unsetting Sun that was covered in energy storms, the mausoleum was surrounded by violent whirlwinds. The pools of water in the grassland were already almost completely evaporated, and the mud also turned into dry dirt. With the wind that blew violently in the world, some dust floated in from the edge of the Yellow Paper Umbrella, which blocked some light.

Xu Yourong leaned on Chen Changsheng's shoulder and said quietly, "Will we die?"

At this moment, she who was just shy of the edge of death was extremely weak, whether physically or mentally. Chen Changsheng's gaze bypassed the edge of the Yellow Paper Umbrella, and stared at the ten stone pillars in the wind and dust in the surroundings of the mausoleum. He thought about the outcome she had calculated before, and was currently doing some type of comparison. Suddenly, he heard her speak, and said after thinking a little, "Perhaps... but I won't let you die."

Xu Yourong said with a gentle voice, "Before, if you did not give me your blood, I would already be dead. However, before, I did not fear death, but now I do. I don't know why."

Chen Changsheng looked into her eyes and said, "Perhaps... it's because you have a reason to live for?"

Xu Yourong thought a little and said, “Perhaps.”

Chen Changsheng gave a smile that originated from the bottom of his heart and said, “I am very happy.”

Xu Yourong looked at his smile and said, “I am also very happy. But the more I am like this, the more I don’t want to die.”

Chen Changsheng said seriously, “Yes, so I am thinking how we can continue to live.”

Xu Yourong made fun of him, “Are you very good at coming up with solutions?”

“No, but matters regarding how to continue living... I have often thought about it.”

After saying that, he continued to observe the wind and dust in the surroundings of the mausoleum and the images in the wind and dust, especially the area that was covered in white grass before, and was now covered by monster corpses and dust. Many monsters had already died, and even more monsters fought against the whirlwinds, or were perhaps being blown everywhere by the whirlwinds. Death would always arrive, whether early or late. Other than the Yellow Paper Umbrella in front of the main entrance of the mausoleum, there were no other places that could give the beings that were once powerful and fierce any coverage.

Just at this moment, a black shadow passed through the violent flows of energy and the whistling wind and dust, and arrived in front of the main entrance of the mausoleum like lightning. It passed through an extremely small crack at the edge of the Yellow Paper Umbrella, and landed heavily on the heavy stone door of the mausoleum. It gave off a muffled sound as it collided with the stone door, and several cracks formed on the door.

To be able to evade the storms of energy released by the Heavenly Tome Monoliths, disregard the sky full of wind and sand, and almost knock over the main entrance of the mausoleum... it was a bird. The bird was covered in messy feathers and did not seem pretty at all. Its right foot was already destroyed, and it was covered in marks of blood. It seemed just like a pheasant that had escaped with its life under the arrows of a hunter.

The pheasant rolled out from the center of the crack in the stone door, and landed on the ground. It used a leg to stand up with great difficulty, and moved its neck. It flapped a wing, dislodging most of the dust and water from it, and seemed slightly satisfied. Afterwards, it gazed at the sky full of wind and sand at the edge of the Yellow Paper Umbrella, and gave out a few angry pheasant cries. The space under the Yellow Paper Umbrella was very small, so most of the dust and grit that it had flapped off landed on Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong's faces. The two could not help but begin coughing.

Hearing the sound of coughing, the pheasant remembered something. Its two demonic eyes that seemed golden looked around, and then suddenly it became abnormally quiet. Without even glancing at Chen Changsheng and Xu Yourong, it retreated backwards without a sound, as if it wanted to escape from their

gaze. The problem was that it was only so big under the umbrella, so where could it retreat to?

# Chapter 345 - The Missing Black Rock

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An elegant hand extended towards the pheasant, and gently rubbed its head. The pheasant was slightly unhappy, but it did not dare to show any signs of unhappiness. It extended its neck in a clever and sincere manner, and allowed the hand to rub it. It seemed just like a quail.

It was Xu Yourong's hand—the pheasant knew very well what kind of blood flowed in the girl's body. It disliked it very much; it had to admit that the blood was its bane.

Chen Changsheng also extended his hand towards it, as if he also wanted to touch it. The pheasant also knew very well just how strong the teenager was. Most importantly, he was the owner of the Yellow Paper Umbrella. If it wanted to survive the terrifying storms of energy, it could not offend him. Being rubbed a few times should be a small price to pay—even if it was shedding all its feathers, it could endure it. However... for some reason, the pheasant gave out a sharp screech, and like lightning, it pecked down on the back of Chen Changsheng's hand.

A clear sound that was like the collision of gold and jade resounded.

The pheasant stared blankly. It did not know why it had behaved so violently. Chen Changsheng also stared blankly, and then remembered that although the injuries on his body had already basically healed and that the smell of the blood that flowed out had already become extremely faint, animals and monsters were still unable to reject the enticement.

“Although a great peng in dire straits is not as great as a pheasant, it is still a great peng afterall. It has its own pride,” Xu Yourong said while looking at him. This was not the original common saying. The original saying was ‘a phoenix in dire straits is not as great as a hen’, but she would definitely not say it like that.

Just like she had said, the messy bird that seemed like a pheasant was the Golden-winged Great Peng that had enveloped the entire sky before, but no longer so mighty. In the first moment that it had taken shelter behind the Yellow Paper Umbrella, Chen Changsheng knew that it was the Golden-winged Great Peng, because of its Qi and because of the violent sacred flames in the deepest parts of its pupils. No matter how well it had disguised itself, to be able to pass through the storm of energy and whirlwinds, as well as know that the Yellow Paper Umbrella could protect it, it definitely was that Great Peng.

The original body of the Golden-winged Great Peng had perhaps left and died with Zhou Dufu’s death. Only when Nanke arrived in the Garden of Zhou with the Soul Wood did its spirit that always slept in the shadow of the grassland awaken once again. Right now, the Golden-winged Great Peng was only a fledgling, and did not have the power and level of when it was at its peak. No wonder it could only form a shadow in the sky, and had only recovered the majority of its divine aura after Nanke had used the power of her soul and the Soul Wood to fuse with the Great Peng.

Chen Changsheng did not attempt to touch the baby peng again. The baby peng slowly became quiet, and was no longer as nervous and alert as before. The feeling of violence in two smears of sacred

flame disappeared, and it was replaced by some sort of complicated emotions.

Chen Changsheng understood what it wanted to convey, and could not help but stare blankly. The message the baby peng conveyed was all in its eyes. It was beseechment, request and imploration. It was sorrow, pain, sadness and despair—the countless monsters in the Garden of Zhou were all its companions and subordinates. The monsters had lived in the grassland for centuries, separated from the outside world and without any conflict between each other. The grassland was their home town, and right now, their home town was about to be destroyed.

Chen Changsheng said in his heart that it did not need to request him to do anything. He would try his best to preserve the world. The baby peng seemed to hear what he had said in his heart, and became even more quiet. It seemed extremely lovable. However, what was interesting was that it was still unwilling to approach him, and instead seemed to be willing to take a few steps towards Xu Yourong who was supposed to be even more feared and disliked. It leaned against her body in a well-behaved manner.

Chen Changsheng's remaining attention was always focused on the wind and sand in the surroundings of the mausoleum. When he conversed with Xu Yourong and communicated heart-to-heart with the Great Peng, he was always doing calculations in his heart. According to what Xu Yourong had said before, the relationship between the ten monoliths belonged to some change in some formation. Now, because the Sword Pool had been removed, the balance in the formation had been broken, and could not be recovered ever again, unless he could find the empty spot that had been filled in with the Sword Pool.

Yes, in the formation, the Sword Pool was only a replacement object. What was the Sword Pool replacing? Xu Yourong said that Zhou Dufu had taken twelve Heavenly Tome Monoliths, but there were only ten stone pillars here. So where were the other two?

From the very start, Chen Changsheng always felt that he had forgotten something. It was the blank memory in his final moment of comprehending the monoliths in the Mausoleum of Books. Afterwards, he remembered something vaguely so an unrestrained idea appeared in his head.

In order to prove the idea, he always focused on the surroundings of the mausoleum, to find the evidence that could prove his idea—he needed to get enough confirmation before following along with the idea, because it was an extremely dangerous act. People only had one life, so it was the last chance.

Sand and wind covered the skies. From time to time, sand dunes that were like small mountains formed on the ground in the surroundings of mausoleum, and other times, even the tough gray stone ground would be flipped. He always focused on that area, which was also the area that Xu Yourong had calculated. It was the area that was once covered in white grass, and now covered in sand and monster corpses. It finally revealed its true appearance after hundreds of years.

There was a ruined stone wall. It seemed like a base—a base for a monolith.

There should have been a Heavenly Tome Monolith there—Chen Changsheng confirmed the fact, and with a slight movement of spiritual sense, he took out an object and held it in his hand. He then looked at the baby peng. The baby peng originally felt uneasy, and wanted to look at something else. It did not want to meet gazes with him, but it discovered that because it was too nervous, its neck actually became stiff.

A human and a peng gazed at each other. The atmosphere was slightly weird. The baby peng thought in his head, just why is it me? Chen Changsheng spoke in his heart: it's because you're an impressive Golden-winged Great Peng. Only you can withstand the havoc of the storms of energy, at least for a moment. The baby peng thought with resentment, why can't you do it? Chen Changsheng squeezed the handle of the umbrella and said in his heart: even if I am correct, the Garden of Zhou will still collapse. I have even more important things to do. The consciousness of the baby peng became quiet, and then it accepted his explanation.

Chen Changsheng opened his palm. In the centre of it was a black rock.

The black rock was around half a finger long, and its shape was slender. It was entirely inky black, and the surface of the rock seemed to be hidden by a layer of faint fog. It was like a night sky that did not have stars, but had starlight. It caused people who had seen it to become intoxicated, and truly want to sink into it. It obviously was not an ordinary object. It was the black rock that he had found in the Pavilion of Ascending Mist, behind Wang Zhice's portrait.

When the baby peng saw the black rock, a feeling of dread flashed past its pupils. Only after a while did it calm down, and it opened its beak to pick up the black rock.

Chen Changsheng turned the Yellow Paper Umbrella towards the side, providing a path for the baby peng.

When he did that, he always used his body to block Xu Yourong's line of vision. It was not because he did not want her to learn his secrets, nor was it because she was preventing him from doing what he soon needed to do.

A breeze formed, and the baby peng transformed into a black shadow. It flew out from the Yellow Paper Umbrella, and passed through the violent winds that wreaked havoc and the terrifying cracks in space. It followed the guide of Chen Changsheng's gaze from before, and arrived at the very inconspicuous base for a monolith in the sky full of wind and sand. It loosened its beak, and closely afterwards... the black rock landed accurately on the monolith base.

It was as if the starry sky had arrived in the Garden of Zhou that never had a starry sky.

It was very dark, but it was also very tranquil.

A great but tranquil Qi arose from the monolith base.

In the next moment, a black Heavenly Tome Monolith appeared

on the broken monolith base.

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# Chapter 346 - The Past Of Monoliths And Swords

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As the black rock landed on the monolith base, it turned into a black Heavenly Tome Monolith. A distant and ancient Qi exuded from the monolith, and slowly fused into one with the Qi from the ten other monoliths. The formation that was hidden in a relative position to it seemed to undergo some subtle but definitely important changes with the arrival of the Qi.

The surroundings of the mausoleum quieted down slightly, and layers of rock no longer fell from the surface of the stone pillars. On the surface of the black stone monoliths that were already revealed, a gloomy, cold light glowed. At least several hundred thin dimensional cracks flowed between the stone pillars.

The line-like dimensional cracks that floated between the stone pillars were actually extremely terrifying. They were like dark abysses, and would rip apart everything that approached them. Once something was swallowed by the cracks, it would be sent to void space, and endure an eternal and endless drift of loneliness. Fortunately, the cracks were currently bound by some sort of power, and no longer drifted about.

In the whistling, violent wind, the clear cry of the baby peng resounded. The cry was so happy that it was full of the delight of a successful revenge. In its past life, it was Zhou Dufu's mount, and it had once seen its powerful owner suppress the proud stone monoliths with its own eyes. Now it seemed like *déjà vu*, so how could it not be proud of itself?

Chen Changsheng's gaze retracted from the dimension cracks, and looked at the eleven stone pillars in the surroundings of the mausoleum. Using Xu Yourong's method of deduction that she had mentioned before, he did the calculation again, and confirmed that the formation could control the storms of energy brought upon by the appearance of the Heavenly Tome Monoliths. At the same time, it confirmed that his memory and the idea that seemed mystical were not wrong.

When he viewed the monoliths in the Mausoleum of Books at night before, the seventeen monoliths formed a star chart. However, it was always incomplete, so he was unable to break through the threshold, until the last moment, when the black rock that he had obtained from the Pavilion of Ascending Mist gave off a bright light, and filled in the star chart. Only then did he truly comprehend the true meaning of the Heavenly Tome Monoliths, and break through to the upper realm of Ethereal Opening.

An immeasurable amount of starlight washed over the mausoleum. At that time, he was in a condition where he was in a mental journey, and did not know what had happened in his own consciousness at all. After what had happened, he forgot about the usage of the black rock even more, and only had an extremely vague and blurry impression. Fortunately, he still managed to remember it in the end, and receive verification.

The black rock in the Pavilion of Ascending Mist, behind Wang Zhice's portrait... was a Heavenly Tome Monolith.

With this, the greatest secret of the Mausoleum of Books, as well as the greatest secret of the Garden of Zhou, which could even be

considered as the greatest secret of the continent in the past thousand years, finally revealed a majority of its truths before his eyes. Although the stories that occurred between the once-peerless experts were already forgotten and buried in oblivion, he had already managed to see some truths.

Many years ago, Zhou Dufu took twelve monoliths from the Mausoleum of Books. The matter itself was already extremely universally shocking—no one understood how he did it, nor how he could preserve the monoliths outside of the Mausoleum of Books. It was also an extremely outrageous matter.

The Heavenly Tome Monoliths were the sacred objects of the Heavenly Dao. Within the monoliths hid something that did not belong to this world, which could be called violent energy. The Qi and energy originated from another world. To this world, it was like countless sparks, while the mountains, rivers, oceans, trees, beasts, and humans—all the existences of the world—were just a pile of dry firewood.

As soon as dry firewood and fire met, countless flames would definitely form. Fortunately, when the Heavenly Tomes descended many years ago, a type of restriction formed naturally, which connected them with the earth as one, allowing them to rest quietly using the energy of the thick earth. As a result, in the Mausoleum of Books, the energy could be kept calmly within the stone monoliths. Once it left the Mausoleum of Books, the Qi that was incompatible with the world would naturally come out of the monoliths, and set everything in the world alight. The distant, ancient Qi seemed peaceful, but to this world, it represented destruction.

As a result, the monoliths could not leave the Mausoleum of Books.

Zhou Dufu instead did exactly the opposite, and he even succeeded. A Heavenly Tome Monolith was lost outside for some reason, and he brought the remaining eleven monoliths into the Garden of Zhou. Even though the Garden of Zhou was separated from the world, even though his powers were close to miracles, he was still unable to conceal the Qi of the eleven monoliths, to prevent their Qi from coming in contact with the real world. As a result, he used astonishing methods and his genius-level intelligence and came up with an extremely fantastic method—he created a formation with the eleven monoliths.

The formation was a type of subtle and clever imitation of the Mausoleum of Books, or put straightforwardly, a shrunken version of the Mausoleum of Books. Xu Yourong could use such a short time to understand the connection between the stone pillars, to understand the wondrous method Zhou Dufu had used before, because she had studied the Mausoleum of Books and the Heavenly Tome Monoliths since childhood.

Relying on such a formation, Zhou Dufu let the Qi of the eleven monoliths that had left the Mausoleum of Books forcefully restrain each other without end. He created his own independent world, and used the seemingly weak balance to stop destruction from occurring. In order to protect the balance from being destroyed by people, he left countless terrifying monsters in the Plains of the Unsetting Sun.

If matters really did continue as such, perhaps after Zhou Dufu's

death, with the flow of time, the Garden of Zhou's rules may have slowly collapsed, and the mausoleum may have crumbled. However, the Heavenly Tome Monoliths hidden in the eleven stone pillars would remain undiscovered, quietly enduring the wind and the rain for all of eternity.

Yet, there were no matters that were eternal in the world. In fact, just a few years after Zhou Dufu had entered the Mausoleum of Books to steal monoliths, a man secretly entered the Garden of Zhou with the intention of stealing the stone pillars. Just based on level of cultivation and battle prowess, the man obviously was not as great as Zhou Dufu, but in other aspects, he was more outstanding than Zhou Dufu in the hearts of everybody.

The man was Wang Zhice.

Perhaps because of Emperor Taizong's order to discover the whereabouts of the monoliths, or perhaps because he wanted to prove some idea he had, Wang Zhice entered the Garden of Zhou. Through some unknown method, he retrieved one of the Heavenly Tome Monoliths from a stone pillar, and turned it into a black rock mystically.

Zhou Dufu naturally discovered this, and then problems occurred.

Of the eleven monoliths, one was missing. This meant that the formation that he had spent all his efforts on was destroyed.

It could be imagined that the Garden of Zhou back then was the

same as the present time, full of storms of energy and whistling whirlwinds that wreaked havoc.

Zhou Dufu obviously could use his peerless strength to forcefully suppress the eruption of the Heavenly Tome Monoliths, but it was the same as the very start. He could not stay between the monoliths forever, so he needed to fix the formation, or in other words, he needed to find another Heavenly Tome Monolith.

Very obviously, the imperial family of Great Zhou and the Orthodoxy that had already experienced it once would not give him another opportunity. Perhaps when he sat on the mausoleum and contemplated, he saw that there was still a sword that was unwilling to yield in the sea of grass. Perhaps it was Chen Xuanba's Dragoncry Sword, or perhaps it was the Holy Maiden Sword from South Stream Temple. Anyway, it allowed him to think of a method.

Since it was very difficult to find another Heavenly Tome Monolith, he could only find a replacement object.

Of course, the replacement object needed to be powerful, and needed the power that was equal to the Heavenly Tome Monolith.

The replacement object Zhou Dufu chose was sword intent.

He used ten thousand swords to replace the Heavenly Tome Monolith.

With that, the Garden of Zhou slowly recovered its peace.

The Plains of the Unsetting Sun became peaceful once again.

There were no more people that had found the mausoleum, much less any person discovering the secrets in the stone pillars.

Until a certain year later on, the soul of a sword separated from its body, and its body drifted out of the grassland along the pools of water. It passed through the small lake, and arrived in the Garden of Zhou's other side. It drifted along the cold lake, and was washed into the forest next to the river by the water. It was taken by Su Li. As a result, an additional umbrella appeared in Wenshui, and the umbrella was currently in Chen Changsheng's hand.

Chen Changsheng took the umbrella into the Garden of Zhou again. To the ten thousand sword intents in the grassland, it was a return. Without the suppression of the ten thousand sword intents, the formation was destroyed. The Heavenly Tome Monoliths appeared, and began to destroy the world. However, who would have thought that he also brought back the Heavenly Tome Monolith that was lost outside? To the Garden of Zhou, it was a true return.

It was possible that it was a story from years ago. Of course, it was only Chen Changsheng's conjecture. At that moment, he did not know about the true secret of the Yellow Paper Umbrella. There were still many details that were not clear enough in the story he had imagined. Why did Wang Zhice only take away one monolith all those years ago? Was taking away one monolith the limit of his ability, or did it mean that his original intention of

taking away the monolith was not for searching, but to destroy the formation and as a result, to destroy the Garden of Zhou? Or perhaps, he even wanted to use such a method to deal with Zhou Dufu?

No one knew what Wang Zhice was thinking all those years ago, and there was also no one who knew whether a world-shaking battle had occurred in the Garden of Zhou all those years ago. According to the records of history, Wang Zhice and Zhou Dufu never battled. According to rumors among the people, they were sworn brothers. However, who knew? Those experts that had once crisscrossed the continent, that virtuous predecessor who once blanketed the capital in the radiance of the stars—how they had met and how they had battled was beyond Chen Changsheng's understanding, and even beyond his imagination.

The baby peng passed through the terrifying dimension cracks, and flew back in front of the main entrance of the mausoleum.

Chen Changsheng stared into its eyes and did not say anything. It understood, its eyes became gloomy and it thought, this is a transaction. Since I have already completed my part, just why should I continue to help you? Also, the way you look at her is lifeless. If I can't fly out in time, what will happen?

Yes, it was still a little too late.

The stone pillars no longer flaked rocks, and the Heavenly Tome Monoliths no longer gave off clear light. The distant and ancient Qi had been retracted back into the black rock once again, but the world of the Garden of Zhou was already riddled with gaping

wounds. The countless storms of energy continued to rip apart the sea of grass and mountain ranges. Most terrifyingly, the sky continued to collapse without stopping. The monsters in the grassland seemed to feel a sliver of a chance to survive, and currently ran wildly in the direction away from the mausoleum as if their life depended on it. However, the mountain ranges far away had also already collapsed. Who knew whether they could escape before the world was destroyed?

Chen Changsheng turned around and looked at Xu Yourong.

Xu Yourong already felt the changes that occurred outside, and her gaze on him was full of shock.

Zhou Dufu arranging eleven Heavenly Tome Monoliths into a formation was something she could understand. She had told Chen Changsheng how the problem could be solved, but she had not thought that Chen Changsheng would actually be able to solve the problem. It caused her to be very shocked, and even slightly at a loss—why would he have a Heavenly Tome Monolith?

It was just that she could not say that in time, so she did not say anything.

The Heavenly Tome Monoliths quieted down. They needed to seize the moment and leave, leave together.

However, Chen Changsheng did not think like that. He looked at the Garden of Zhou that was on the brink of destruction and said, “You go first.”

# Chapter 347 - If The Sky Is Collapsing, Someone Must Hold It Up

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“Why?” Xu Yourong’s complexion was slightly pale.

“The gate of the Garden of Zhou is about to open.” Chen Changsheng glanced at the baby peng, but what he said instead was a different topic.

The reopening of the Garden of Zhou was obviously good news, but in his voice, there were no feelings of happiness, because the collapse continued. He followed Xu Yourong’s method and let the black rock turn into a Heavenly Tome Monolith, which stopped the arrival of destruction. However, it was not enough—the snowy mountain had already begun to collapse. The initial great power of the world that caused the collapse had calmed down again, but who would stop the avalanche once it grew out of control?

A storm of energy arrived before the mausoleum. With a dozen or so terrifying ripping sounds, the mausoleum began to shake violently. Several boulders above the south-western wall began to fall. Because of the cracks, the azure blue sky became dark and gloomy. Many fragments of the sky had landed on the grassland without their notice and were now being blown around in the violent wind. There were countless flowing flames in the distance in the Garden of Zhou, and there was black smoke and fire everywhere. Monsters ran in a panic, and many miserable howls and sad sounds could be vaguely heard. The world was currently being destroyed.

Xu Yourong looked into his eyes—she did not have the power to

raise her arm to grab his collar, but that was what she implied. Before, she had indeed said that even if the balance between the Heavenly Tome Monoliths was regained, it would be useless. The Garden of Zhou was already undergoing the process of destruction. However, if the gate of the Garden of Zhou really was about to open, why could they not leave together? Why did she have to leave first?

“The sky is falling,” he looked into her eyes and said very seriously.

“And then?” she looked into his eyes and asked very seriously.

“If there is no one to hold it up, no one will make it out.”

Chen Changsheng raised the Yellow Paper Umbrella and stood up. He turned around, looked at her and said, “I need to stay behind and find a method to make it last a little longer.”

Xu Yourong’s trembling voice was like drizzle disturbing the lake water. “You? How... will you do it?”

How will you do it? What will happen to you? It was unknown which question was closer to what she was asking.

Chen Changsheng looked at her and said very sincerely, “I will see.”

The Heavenly Tome Monoliths had returned to the Garden of

Zhou and the formation had regained stability. It helped the interior of the Garden of Zhou gain the most valuable period of time. The gate of the Garden of Zhou was currently opening, but with its current speed, it was extremely possible that it would not make it. If the people outside could not open the Garden of Zhou in time, the sky would collapse, and the monsters that lived inside, as well as the hundreds of human cultivators that had entered the Garden of Zhou would all die in the sky full of flowing flames.

The Garden of Zhou would be destroyed. So many lives might die. The most direct reason was because he had removed all the swords from the Sword Pool—there was no need to care about any demon scheme or Black Robe's sinister arrangements. He did not pay attention to the fact that they had arrived in the depths of the grasslands to save each other, or discuss the summoning of the sword intent and the Yellow Paper Umbrella. In short, all the matters happened because of him, so naturally they were to be all solved by him.

He had once thought that if he could not stop the destruction of the Garden of Zhou, perhaps he could attempt to use the dagger to take away all the human cultivators and some monsters from the Garden of Zhou. However, the problem was that the space of the dagger had a limit. At the moment, it already stored ten thousand broken swords, and was unable to store anything more. He believed that Xu Yourong's spatial artifact was the same.

Right now, the only thing he could do was slow the collapse of the Garden of Zhou, and give the people in the Garden of Zhou enough time to leave. It was also because of the imploration of the baby peng to help the countless monsters in the grassland to seize a chance of living. As a result, he needed to stay, and wished that he

could last a little longer, to seize a little more time.

However... why? Xu Yourong could not ask the question in time. Her shoulders were grabbed by the baby peng, and she was lifted into the sky outside the mausoleum.

The Great Peng had said that it could only carry one person. Chen Changsheng also could not make the final explanation in time, and watched as the baby peng took her away, flying into the distance.

The wind in the surroundings of the mausoleum blew violently. Xu Yourong was extremely weak, and was unable to say anything at all. She could only stare blankly at him who stood on the mausoleum. She looked at him very seriously, as if she wanted to remember all of his face. Looking at the person on the mausoleum that became smaller and smaller, she shouted, "Xu Sheng, you idiot."

The wind really was very strong. By the time her voice had traveled to the mausoleum, it was already very soft. However, Chen Changsheng heard it. He yelled a sentence loudly back at her, but this time, the wind was too strong, and she did not hear it.

"I'm not called Xu Sheng, I'm called Chen Changsheng."

After saying that, he turned around and ran up the mausoleum. The mausoleum was very big. From the end of the divine path to the highest point, it was a distance of several thousand zhang. Also, the mausoleum was formed from huge boulders, and was

extremely difficult to climb. Fortunately, he possessed strength and speed far beyond an ordinary person's. In a short time, he arrived at the highest point of the mausoleum.

He stood on the peak boulder of the mausoleum, and looked at the flowing flames that constantly rained down in the distance. He looked at the black smoke and burning forests, and the shattered blue dome of the sky that seemed to be right in front of him. He grasped the dagger in his hand tightly—the sky really was collapsing.

Luoluo had once said something to him full of emotions.

It was what the White Emperor had said to her: “If the sky collapses, there will be someone tall who holds it up for you.”

Right now, he was at the highest point in the mausoleum, as well as the highest point in the entire Garden of Zhou. It was higher than the peak of the Sunset Valley. It was the closest point to the sky, the furthest point from the ground and the point where he could see the furthest. As a result, he was currently the tallest person in the Garden of Zhou.

The sky was collapsing, so he obviously had to hold it up. This had nothing to do with the quote ‘Great power comes with great responsibilities’, because he believed this originally was his responsibility. Also, he just happened to have capabilities in this area—who just happened to be on the mausoleum, holding an umbrella in his hand with ten thousand swords in his scabbard?

He switched the dagger and the Yellow Paper Umbrella between his hands. With a screech, the sharp dagger was deeply embedded in the rock, which helped him stabilize himself in the violent winds. Afterwards, he extended the Yellow Paper Umbrella in his right hand towards the sky on the verge of collapse. With a whoosh, the Yellow Paper Umbrella was opened in the violent wind, turning into a cowering, small, yellow flower, as if it could be ripped into shreds by the whirlwinds at any time.

It could be said that the Yellow Paper Umbrella was the magical artifact that possessed the greatest defense in the world. With the prideful and powerful sword intent of the Heaven Shrouding Sword, if it fell into the hands of a peerless expert, it could be imagined that it could produce a fame that was extremely dazzling. However... he still could not rely on just the umbrella to hold up a sky, even though it was just the sky of the miniature world of the Garden of Zhou. Not to mention that the Yellow Paper Umbrella was currently in his hands. He who was at the upper realm of Ethereal Opening was obviously very outstanding in the younger generation, but in front of the sky, he was insignificant.

Please come out and help me, Chen Changsheng muttered in his heart.

This was his responsibility, so he had to endure it. This also seemed to be the responsibility of the swords, but the swords were originally kept in the Garden of Zhou against their will, so he used the word 'please'.

Without a pause, with his thought, countless shrill sword resonances appeared in the surroundings of the giant boulder that

was at the peak of the mausoleum. They created a great many powerful gusts of wind, and for just an instant, they actually suppressed all the whirlwinds that wreaked havoc in the Garden of Zhou.

Countless swords surged out from the scabbard by his waist!

Whoosh whoosh whoosh! The swords brushed past the side of the Yellow Paper Umbrella, and then quickly dispersed, like fireworks.

The ten thousand swords turned into ten lines formed by swords and rose from the peak of the mausoleum. They fell through the sky, just like the skeleton of an umbrella.

It was a huge umbrella that covered thousands of li.

It was opened by Chen Changsheng, and held up the sky that was on the brink of collapse.

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# Chapter 348 - From The Garden Of Zhou To The Snowy Plains

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The huge umbrella formed from swords covered the sky of the Garden of Zhou. It blocked the flowing flames that fell from the sky and held up the dimensional fragments that cracked and fell. The fragments of the sky originally should not have had any weight, but on the shapeless umbrella surface, they seemed to have an infinite weight. With only a soft bang, Chen Changsheng's legs were deeply embedded in the tough rock. Around them, countless tiny cracks formed, and his pants were immediately ripped to countless shreds.

In the next moment, his body began to tremble violently. The unimaginable weight and pressure of the sky were directly passed through the ten thousand swords into his body. Every bone in his body seemed to creak, as if they could break at any moment.

The terrifying sounds of cracking continued to resound, and his two feet continued in breaking open the boulder. He could not endure it anymore, and his right knee went soft, kneeling down. His knee heavily landed on the boulder, which crushed the rock into countless pieces of gravel and dust.

With a muffled rumble from below that was like thunder, a great amount of dust rose into the air, and slowly enveloped the surrounding grassland and the White Grass Path that was no longer as it was before. The entire mausoleum began to tremble, and then actually sank by a few inches in an extremely short amount of time.

This was the weight of the sky.

Chen Changsheng knelt on one knee on the peak of the mausoleum. Underneath the sky, his complexion became paler and paler, and his expression became more and more painful. His body that had bathed in the blood of a true dragon could be said to be tough like steel, so that even Nanke's Peacock Plume could not penetrate. However, under the pure and terrifying weight, even though his body was like true steel, it was as if it was going to be crushed into scrap metal.

Fortunately, it was not the real sky in the end, and only fragments of the sky were ripped off by the storms of energy. Although it was extremely painful and he was almost directly crushed to the point where his mind would be shattered, he still endured it in the end. His body slowly stopped trembling.

The eleven stone pillars in the surroundings of the mausoleum had also truly calmed down, and there was some sort of Qi that flowed out from the black stone monoliths. If it were not for the black rock Wang Zhice had left behind, neither he, Xu Yourong, the human cultivators, nor the monsters in the Garden of Zhou could have managed this. At least there was still a chance of surviving now.

He knelt on the highest point of the mausoleum with his left hand holding the Yellow Paper Umbrella, and his right hand holding the dagger that was embedded in the boulder. He raised his head with great difficulty and gazed into the distance. He hoped that the chance of surviving had already arrived.

The shattered sky itself was very gloomy, and at this moment, it was covered up by countless swords, so the world of the Garden of Zhou became even darker. The collapse of the world was temporarily stopped, but the wind continued to blow violently on the grassland. He could see many monsters that had already run to the edge of the grassland, and could also see the burning forest in the distance. He could vaguely feel Qi leaving at high speeds. Did someone already leave?

Afterwards, his line of vision passed through the violent wind and sand and landed in the distance. He could vaguely see that the girl that was grabbed by the Great Peng had already left the grassland and disappeared into the mountain ranges close to the horizon.

You must live. You must live well.

He thought quietly in his heart.

The gate of the Garden of Zhou may have already opened. The people that participated in the trials were currently leaving, and monsters may have escaped. However, he could not leave. As soon as he removed the ten thousand swords, the sky would immediately collapse, and both he and the Garden of Zhou would turn into gray smoke.

The whirlwinds on the grassland remained violent. His knee was deeply embedded in the boulder at the highest point in the mausoleum, and he lowered his head tiredly. He felt that his current situation was just like the famous tragic hero in the legends of the Orthodoxy.

If the hero on the precipitous mountain path that used all his strength to stop the rolling boulder gave way slightly, he would be squashed by the boulder. He could only expend all his life in the process of resisting against the boulder for all of eternity.

Chen Changsheng had never thought that he would be in such despairing straits. He did not want to be a tragic hero, and also did not have the thought of giving up his life for his principles. He was not that great. It was just that he wanted to live, and also wished for many people to live.

For example, the people he knew and the people he cared for.

Zhexiu, if you are still alive, then live. Qi Jian, you also should still be alive. And the elven girl that had just disappeared into the mountain range, and had the same surname as him but a beautiful name... Young lady Chujian, live well.

What should he do next? He had said before to Xu Yourong that he would see. The three words of ‘he would see’ actually also had the meaning that he did not know what to do, but he really wanted to see whether the change that he waited for would occur or not.

In the legend of the Orthodoxy, the reason the famous tragic hero spent all his time and life resisting against the boulder, before turning into a stone sculpture in despair, was that in the endless days, no one came to help him. No one was willing to help him because he was once very arrogant, and never helped the lowly common people.

Although Chen Changsheng often made people speechless, it did not make any person feel that he was arrogant. Confidence and arrogance were never synonyms, and he was very willing to help other people, such as the human cultivators that currently fled towards the outside world.

A just cause always receives abundant support.

Great people of the Orthodoxy, like archbishop Mei Lisha, and experts like the Solitary Drunk Under the Moon, Zhu Luo, were all outside the Garden of Zhou. If he could last a little longer, these people would definitely come and save him.

That was how Chen Changsheng thought.

But until when would he have to hold on? How much longer did he have to endure?

The terrifying weight of the sky caused pain to every point in his body. With the flow of time, his right hand which held up the umbrella became heavier and heavier, until his arm slowly became numb, as if it was crippled.

After an unknown amount of time, from the dagger that was embedded in the boulder at the peak of the mausoleum, the Black Dragon's voice resounded, "Are you... still well?"

Chen Changsheng lowered his head and asked, "Are you still

well?”

He cared more about how it was currently. Before, in order to battle against the Golden-winged Great Peng, the spiritual soul of the Black Dragon had awoken in the lake water outside his Ethereal Palace, and then entered the dagger. Afterwards, there was actually no time for them to communicate at all.

The Black Dragon stayed silent for a while and then said, “Still well.”

Chen Changsheng said, “I’m still well too. I... still can last a little longer.”

The Black Dragon said, “I understand it. This is the so-called play on words in your human language, but do you know, compared to the dragon language, this type of technique, or level of complexity, is just so outrageously pitiable.”

Chen Changsheng said tiredly, “Can we talk about other things?”

The Black Dragon said, “Yes, you still don’t seem to know something. I am thinking whether I should tell you or not...”

Chen Changsheng said, “Whatever.”

The Black Dragon’s voice became slightly cautious. “You... won’t die?”

“No.” Chen Changsheng directly answered without even thinking.

The Black Dragon stayed silent for a very long time, and said, “Looks like you really will die.”

Chen Changsheng was slightly helpless and said, “Why do you say so? I already said I won’t die.”

The Black Dragon said, “Just now, you replied too quickly... you aren’t mindful.”

Chen Changsheng felt disinclined to continue to pay any attention to it, but he also felt that something was wrong. The Black Dragon could speak the human tongue. This did not cause him any surprise, but it was just that its voice was soft, like a girl’s...

He did not ask, because at that moment, he truly did feel very tired, very exhausted and very pained. He almost... could not endure it anymore.

This was the weight of the sky. How long could mortals hold it up for?

He did not sweat, but he felt that all the muscles in his body had already ripped apart, and was about to lose strength. His mind had become rather distracted, and his true essence was already

completely consumed. Even his vision became blurry.

The ten thousand swords became silent together, and he also became silent. He even entered a state of forgetfulness, forgetting everything.

After an unknown amount of time, the whistling wind slowly weakened, and the pressure brought on by the violent streams of energy slowly disappeared. The weight that pressed on the Yellow Paper Umbrella also slowly disappeared. The sky became peaceful.

Chen Changsheng opened his eyes. He was extremely tired, and he looked around at his surroundings.

At that moment, a snowflake fell, and landed on the Yellow Paper Umbrella. Such a soft flake of snow actually caused a huge amount of pain on his wrist. He almost could not hold onto the umbrella anymore. The Garden of Zhou... was snowing?

No.

This was not the Garden of Zhou. This was a plain of snow.

He looked into the distance, and only vaguely saw a grand city under the shadow in the sky.

Where was this? He was very confused and did not know what had happened. Shock and exhaustion stole his mobility, and he remained in the position he was in before—he knelt on one knee in

the snow with the dagger in his left hand and the Yellow Paper Umbrella held up in the right hand.

The sky there did not break. The plain of snow was very pretty, and he obviously seemed rather ridiculous in such a position.

With the sound of steps, a person walked to his side and gave a soft expression of surprise. He said, “There’s a sword.”

Afterwards, the person extended his hand, and grabbed the Yellow Paper Umbrella from Chen Changsheng’s hands.

# Chapter 349 - Journeying Thousands Of Li To Deliver A Sword

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The snowy plains in the morning were very quiet. Perhaps because of that shadow or because the cloud layer had still not dispersed, the morning light was very faint. The snow that fell in the morning light was also very sparse, and when it landed, it made not a single sound. This murderous scheme which would inevitably be recorded in the annals of history, this assassination which would inevitably alter the course of the continent's history, had already gone on for a long time. Although a victor had not been decided, the conclusion seemed evident. All around, the mountainous figures of the Demon Generals were silent and austere and that shadow still hung high up in the sky. Black Robe was calmly seated at the snowy hill some ten li out. The human in the middle of their encirclement still stood tall and firm, but he seemed lonely and desolate.

Suddenly, a wind gusted through the snowy plain, swirling the snow about. The deathly stillness over the scene had just been shattered by the whistling wind and then was soon after completely ripped apart by a fierce explosion. With the emergence of countless powerful Qi from the snowy hill upon which Black Robe sat, innumerable flakes of snow shot outwards and into the sky. Those several life lamps that hung in the air were instantly extinguished and several silky threads were torn out of the front of Black Robe's gown. Even more frightening was that the seemingly invulnerable square plate... had been rendered into a pile of scrap.

Before countless pairs of eyes could make their way over to the snowy hill where Black Robe was located, they were cast towards a certain place on the snowy plain.

In the snowy plain, an extra person had suddenly appeared.

In the present continent, who could break through that shadow and the layers of layers of defense consisting of tens of thousands of demon soldiers and noiselessly arrive at this place?

It was a youth, his right hand holding up an old umbrella and his left hand gripping a dagger. His eyes were tightly shut and his clear and youthful countenance displayed an unswerving determination that could only be seen at the brink of life and death. One could also make out on his face a boundless exhaustion.

After who knows how long had passed, that youth opened his eyes.

This youth was naturally Chen Changsheng. He blankly looked around, seeing nothing but white snow. He simply had no clue to what had occurred, only vaguely understanding that he had somehow departed the Garden of Zhou. But just where was this? How could the sky here also have a shadow? How could the will of this shadow be even more terrifying than the great peng's shadow over the Plains of the Unsetting Sun? And what were those over ten mountainous figures all around him? How could they emit a Qi that was just like the Qi emitted by the Demon General couple of Teng Xiaoming and Liu Wan'er? It couldn't be that all of these black and mountainous figures were Demon Generals? And a bit more than ten li away on that snowy hill, just who was that man cloaked in that black robe? Why was the Qi that he emitted so sinister? Why was he wearing a black robe?

Chen Changsheng gazed into the distant snowy plain at the faintly discernible silhouette of that imposing city and thought of a certain description recorded in the Daoist Canon. His body became stiff as a board and his mouth gaped open, but no sound emerged. He thought to himself, it can't be. Could it be that the city was the legendary Xuelao City? That he was in the snowy plains in the territory of demons? Those mountainous and dark figures really were all Demon Generals? That black-robed and menacing man was Black Robe? Then what about the shadow?

Just a moment ago, he was in the Garden of Zhou at the peak of the mausoleum, resisting against the descent of the sky. In the next moment, he had been transported more than ten thousand li to the snowy plains in the kingdom of demons and saw the legendary Xuelao City, saw the figures of the demon experts that previously only existed in his books and imagination. If his mind had been just a little weaker, his will a little more fragile, perhaps he would have been shocked into unconsciousness or even frightened to death, all because this scene was truly too inconceivable.

Chen Changsheng possessed an astounding willpower, so he did not faint, but this was not necessarily a good thing. He necessarily had to soberly bear the mental assault of all that he saw before him. He even felt like his spiritual world was on the verge of collapse and his body had grown so rigid that he could not even move a finger.

An ant suddenly found itself in the world of giants, a mortal had mistakenly wandered into the Divine Kingdom of gods in the sea of stars; that was the sort of feeling he had.

The countless snowflakes which had been sent flying into the sky rustled down to the ground, and then the meager snow falling from the clouds slowly drifted down onto the canopy of the umbrella. A deathly stillness still pervaded the snowy plain. Countless gazes separated by several li, several dozen li, and even several thousand li, stared at Chen Changsheng, not making a single sound.

To those experts, Chen Changsheng's appearance was also extremely bizarre.

If some ordinary mortal had appeared in the realm of gods, presumably those gods up high would also be very astonished, wondering how this mere mortal had turned up here.

The snowy plain had sunk into an incredibly odd silence.

Chen Changsheng's body became stiff beyond compare. At the same time as that unimaginably enormous mental shock brought his spiritual world close to collapse, it also caused his thoughts to swiftly work.

In that very short moment of time, he thought of many things. Why he had gone from the Garden of Zhou to this snowy plain in the demon kingdom was obviously not something he could understand in such a brief span of time, so he did not ponder that. Then, why could he see so many legendary demon experts? Were these demon experts here to assassinate him?

This was impossible. Although his status as Principal of the

Orthodox Academy seemed sufficient, in truth, for powerful figures such as these, an upper level Ethereal Opening youth was like an ant. There was no need for such an impressive display of force. Not even that most narcissistic Tang Thirty-Six would dare to claim this.

The target of these demon experts should be someone else. Who was this person?

That middle-aged man who had been besieged by tens of thousands of demon soldiers for several days was already heavily injured. Confronting this plan in which he was certain to die, the expression on his face was still unruly as ever, as if he did not care. Yet when he saw the umbrella in Chen Changsheng's hand, his expression grew solemn.

As if to confirm his conjecture, he walked over to Chen Changsheng. In the snowy plain, he was the closest to Chen Changsheng, with only a dozen or so steps needed to arrive at his side.

"Oh, there's a sword."

That man extended his left hand and took the umbrella.

Chen Changsheng only heard the sound of footsteps. Without any time to even look, he realized that the Yellow Paper Umbrella had been taken away.

He looked at the man.

The man was dressed in a long gown, but not too long, unlike a scholar. At his waist was a sword, but he did not seem like a swordsman. His overall appearance was rather incongruous.

The man's body emitted a clear and cold Qi, like a sword revealing its edge, making it impossible to look at him straight on.

This was Chen Changsheng's first meeting with Su Li. He only saw Su Li's back and he felt a stabbing pain in his eyes.

Only after a very long time had passed would he be able to look directly at this man. The past him did not know that this man was Mount Li's legendary Junior Martial Uncle, Su Li.

After a while, he came to his senses and strenuously stood up. He subconsciously tightened his right hand, but the handle of the umbrella was not there. That sort of empty feeling made him feel somewhat out of sorts.

The Yellow Paper Umbrella was in the hands of that middle-aged man. For some reason, they seemed to be in harmony with each other, as if the umbrella had originally been his.

Seeing this scene, Chen Changsheng once again fell into confusion. All of a sudden, he felt that everything that had happened in the Garden of Zhou was all a dream. Leaving the Mausoleum of Books and then going from the capital to Wenshui

to pick up this umbrella, then entering the plain and then miraculously appearing in these snowy plains; these tens of thousands of li of enduring through hardship was all...to deliver this umbrella into the hands of this man.

To return the Yellow Paper Umbrella to this man.

Su Li's left hand gripped the shaft of the Yellow Paper Umbrella and calmly stared at it. After staring at it for a long time, a smile peeked out of his lips.

Then, the smile broke into unrestrained laughter, a long laughter.

He laughed so happily that his face was beaming.

He gazed at the distant dark mountains that were the Demon Generals, at Black Robe sitting cross-legged amidst the scattered snow, at that shadow in the sky, and said, "You said that I was lacking a sword. Yes, I really was lacking a sword, but now... I have a sword. Isn't it time for you to be afraid?"

Chen Changsheng did not understand. This was clearly an umbrella. Even if there was a strand of sword intent within, how could it be described as a sword?

He did not know that this Yellow Paper Umbrella was a peerlessly famous sword called Heaven Shrouding.

Several hundred years ago, that generation's Sect Master of the Mount Li Sword Sect brought this sword and entered the Garden of Zhou. He battled for three hundred rounds with Zhou Dufu before dying, but his sword remained unbroken.

This sword was the most powerful sword in the Sword Pool, and also the most unwilling, the most desirous of recovering its freedom.

This sword was originally supposed to be inherited by Su Li. This was his sword.

The body of this sword had left the plain and been picked up by Su Li. It had been sent to Wenshui and thus been crafted into an umbrella of a thousand mechanisms and a hundred transformations.

However, there was no sword intent, so it was not the sword he wanted.

The sword intent had always been in the plains, waiting for the body of the sword to return and reunite.

Several hundred years later, Chen Changsheng passed through Wenshui and obtained the umbrella from the Tang clan as a gift. He carried the umbrella into the Garden of Zhou, then into the plains. The sword body and the sword intent met, allowing him to summon the ten thousand swords to soar into the sky.

It seemed that up to here, the story had finally welcomed its perfect ending, but it was not so.

Only when he came to this snowy plain and handed over this umbrella to Su Li could this ending truly be perfect.

Su Li grasped the Yellow Paper Umbrella as he thought about all those centuries ago when he first walked into that cave at the peak of Mount Li and saw that sword hung up on the wall behind his master. He thought of the later years, when he intentionally suppressed his cultivation to Ethereal Opening and entered the Garden of Zhou multiple times to search for that sword, and then he sighed with emotion.

This was Mount Li's sword. This was his master's sword. This was Su Li's sword.

Several hundred years. It really was a long time apart.

How could he not be pleased? How could he not laugh to his heart's content?

As he laughed, the Yellow Paper Umbrella also seemed to laugh.

But this elated laughter still contained a hint of frustration, a strand of regret.

Master, I am holding this sword once more.

But... Zhou Dufu is already dead. I no longer have the chance to slay him with my sword and avenge you.

The clear and unbridled, yet frustrated and regretful laughter echoed through the silent snowy plain, as if it could be heard from a thousand li away.

The meaning behind the laughter was clearly transmitted to the entire world, such that even Chen Changsheng could understand it.

Frustration that Zhou Dufu was dead, regret that he could not fall under this sword.

This was a self-confident, even arrogant way of thinking.

But no one displayed any ridicule or disdain. Even Black Robe maintained his silence.

Because Su Li had already found his sword. Who knew where on the path of the sword he would end up?

The clear laughter gradually died down and the sword ray on Su Li's body gradually faded away. It looked like he had returned to being an average middle-aged man.

He lifted up his head and gazed all around him at those black

mountains that were the enormous figures of the Demon Generals. His expression was calm as he extended his hand and gripped the umbrella handle.

His left hand gripped the shaft of the Yellow Paper Umbrella like it was a sheath.

His right hand gripped the handle of the Yellow Paper Umbrella like he was about to pull out a sword.

Chen Changsheng noticed that his fingers were long and slender, very suitable for playing the zither. Of course, they were even more suitable for holding a sword.

The handle of the umbrella was the hilt of the sword. The instant that his hand landed on the handle of the umbrella, a swift and fierce sword intent enveloped the entirety of this part of the snowy plains.

Several dozens of li away, one of the mountainous figures of the Demon Generals lightly swayed, then heavily fell upon the snow-covered earth.

A spurt of blood sprayed out into the snowy air.

# Chapter 350 - Ten Thousand Li With One Sword

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Su Li's hand grasped the handle of the umbrella. He did not perform any other actions, but the sword intent already reached areas that were several dozen of li away.

There were no sword rays, nor was there any sword wind. The thin snowflakes floated down slowly, but in the surroundings of the snowy plains, countless shrill sounds appeared. Swoosh swoosh swoosh! It was the sound of the edge of the sword cutting through space and through armor. It was the sound of the edge of the blade cutting through the powerful bodies of the Demon Generals.

Around the dozen or so mountainous black shadows of the Demon Generals, countless thin white slashes appeared. The cold wind suddenly separated, the heavy armor suddenly shattered and fresh blood spurted out. Some mountainous shadows fell in the snowy plains with a groan, while other mountainous shadows retreated backwards with a roar. There was actually not a single Demon General that remained where they were originally.

Su Li gazed at the snowy hill over ten li away, and looked at Black Robe who currently sat there cross-legged.

The square plate before Black Robe's body had already become a piece of scrap metal, and on it were densely packed depressions. It did not seem anything like the projection of the Garden of Zhou from before. It was because the square plate had been destroyed that the terrifying explosion occurred before. Even though he was

a peerless expert at such a great level, the injuries he received were not light. His clothes were tattered, and he actually seemed to be in a rather sorry shape.

The square plate of the Garden of Zhou was destroyed for some reason, which caused him injury. Feeling that the arrangements in the Garden of Zhou had failed, it made him very hurt. However, what made him feel the most alert and uneasy was the umbrella currently in Su Li's hands. He had spent a very long time in the arrangements to kill him, for which the demons had sent out countless experts. However, it seemed that problems were about to occur.

If Su Li wanted to stop the assassination the demons had planned, he needed to make another breakthrough in the path of the sword. However, just like he had once said, for an expert of the path of the sword at Su Li's level, even the great dread of life and death would not be able to help him break through the obstacle that he had not broken through in hundreds of years, unless he received that sword.

Now, that sword had come.

How was this possible? Black Robe looked at the teenager behind Su Li and thought silently. As it turned out, all the changes originated from him.

He recognized the Yellow Paper Umbrella and knew the history of it. He recognized Chen Changsheng and knew the history of him. He was the demon Military Advisor who specialized in schemes the most out of the entire continent, and only needed the

control of spiritual sense to deduce the story in the Garden of Zhou, as well as the story after the Garden of Zhou clearly, without a single mistake.

However, no matter how well he deduced it, he was unable to change things that had already happened. He was also unable to make the Yellow Paper Umbrella leave Su Li's side.

Black Robe stood up, and his slightly blue hands were drawn from his sleeves. It seemed as though he was about to crush all the cold gusts of wind in the snowy plains with his hands.

Su Li looked at him silently.

The two were separated by a dozen li or so.

Su Lu grasped onto the handle of the umbrella, and used a little bit of strength through his fingers.

Only the clear resonance of a sword being drawn could be heard.

A bright sword was drawn from the Yellow Paper Umbrella.

As it turned out, this was the true sword of the Yellow Paper Umbrella.

A sword was always hidden in the Yellow Paper Umbrella.

The sword was not completely drawn.

Only half of the sword appeared before the world.

The wind on the snowy plains suddenly hastened, and the thin snowflakes became countless shapeless swords. They rushed forwards with a whistle, and immediately arrived at the snowy hill over ten li away.

Black Robe lowered his head, and brought his hands together. His blue hands floated slightly, as if he was performing a salute. It guarded his face, and with the black robe that had fallen onto the snow, everything was covered up. An extremely frigid Qi received the snowflakes that were like swords.

Swish swish swish! The sound of severing repeatedly resounded on the snowy hill. Countless distinct sword rays appeared in the space around Black Robe.

In the next moment, Black Robe's legs left the snow. He began to float, and his clothes and body seemed to become weightless. With the windy snow and sword rays, he floated backwards, and disappeared into nothingness.

The sword rays slowly dispersed, the sword resonance slowly grew quiet and the snowy wind slowed down.

A black cloth slowly landed on the snowy plains, and at the same time, a streak of blackish red blood appeared.

From over ten li away, Su Li injured Black Robe with one strike. Although the injuries Black Robe had received from the destruction of the square plate could not be considered light, and although he was not in his peak condition, it could not be forgotten that the sword in Su Li's hand was not completely drawn from the sheath. There was still half of it hidden in the Yellow Paper Umbrella. Then just how powerful was the strike?

Su Li did not pay any attention to the retreating Black Robe. He looked at the outline of the demon city that could be vaguely seen in the depths of the snowy plains, and looked at the shadow that contained an unlimited amount of pressure and terrifying willpower. The expression on his face became more and more solemn, but his gaze became more and more fanatical. He yelled, "Come battle!"

With a sudden yell that was like a sword resonance, a true sword resonated through the entire snowy plains.

Su Li's right hand which grasped the handle of the umbrella drew outwards. The sword that gave off cold light appeared.

After hundreds of years, the Heaven Shrouding Sword finally saw light again. The first opponent that it met was the Demon Lord.

With such a return, just how overbearing and unbridled was it?

No matter how wide the sky was, as long as the Heaven

Shrouding Sword was placed before the eyes, not even the sky could be seen.

No matter how terrifying the shadow in the sky was, if he did not want to see it, he would not see it.

Su Li's left hand held onto the Yellow Paper Umbrella, and his right hand casually lifted the Heaven Shrouding Sword. Looking at the shadow in the sky, he had a presence that was able to surprise and overwhelm the world.

Just how powerful and heroic was the person?

Looking at Su Li's back, Chen Changsheng was emotionally moved and speechless.

He knew that he was about to witness firsthand a battle of the highest level in the past few centuries of the continent. Perhaps he would die very quickly, die from the clashing of the Qi from the battle, or perhaps the two that participated in the battle would not even notice his death at all. However, he did not feel cold, and even felt rather warm.

The warmth originated from his heart, from his blood.

There were always hot-blooded times in a person's life.

Even though he had just left the Garden of Zhou and was suddenly pulled into a battle that was close to a divine level where

he would likely die, he did not care. The journey of the Garden of Zhou indeed was not made in vain. For him to be able to witness such heroic figures, to witness such a peerless sword regain its edge, was life or death really worth mentioning?

At this moment, Chen Changsheng already could vaguely guess who the impressive human expert who stood in front of him was.

When he grasped the sword, several powerful Demon Generals fell.

When he drew half of the sword, Black Robe was heavily injured and retreated far away.

Now, his sword had completely left the sheath. He himself had already completely left the sheath as well, and displayed his edge as much as he liked towards the snow and wind, and the shadow in the sky.

Just what kind of power would the third strike have? Would it sever the sky, and directly cut down the shadow before the sword?

With only a moment, Chen Changsheng thought of many things. He felt that his mind was completely and utterly washed by the sword intent that enveloped the entire snowy plains, and he gained unprecedented courage and battle prowess. If he could live, he believed that these gains would definitely make him even stronger.

However, just at this moment, a voice suddenly appeared in his

ears.

“Hold onto the umbrella.”

Chen Changsheng looked at the back of the middle-aged man, and knew that the voice came from him. He just did not know what it meant, and was rather at a loss.

“Still not grabbing it? Otherwise, I’ll retreat first then.”

Su Li looked at the shadow in the sky. His expression was firm and persistent, and his bearing exceeded the ordinary.

Who would have thought that he was secretly whispering such words that lacked in bearing?

Chen Changsheng stared blankly. He did not know what it was exactly about and said, “Senior...”

Su Li did not turn around. His sword pointed towards the sky, signifying that he was unhurried.

However, his voice was just so urgent, and seemed extremely worried.

Also, in order to prevent the demons from discovering it, he did not move his lips, so when he spoke, it had the feeling that he was biting his tongue.

“Senior your face, why don’t you hurry up and grab it, pighead?!”

Chen Changsheng really did stare blankly, and he even began to doubt life.

Senior... aren’t you a legendary expert? Didn’t you traverse the continent unrestrained with a sword? Don’t you want to battle the shadow? Don’t you want to battle an opponent? So... you never wanted to battle since the start, and only wanted to flee? You... at this moment, your heroic spirit is all acting?

This... perhaps it is fake fighting?

Chen Changsheng was unable to describe his current feelings.

The surface of the senior was full of ferociousness and was full of the air of courage and magnanimity, but who would have thought, he was actually like this...

He could not find a suitable phrase. He wanted to say that this was very despicable, and also felt that it was rather disrespectful.

The idol that had stood straight like a tree in his heart for several moments of time just suddenly collapsed with a loud rumble like this.

However, he did not have any choice. Even the senior wanted to run; did he still want to stay behind and battle against the terrifying shadow?

Chen Changsheng's gaze landed on the Yellow Paper Umbrella. He was slightly at a loss, and extended his hand to grab it.

Su Li looked at the shadow in the sky with an indifferent expression and had the air of an expert. Only Chen Changsheng could hear the voice that originated from between his teeth, "You pighead, grab tight, otherwise if you fall off halfway, I'm not stopping to grab you."

Chen Changsheng grabbed the front of the Yellow Paper Umbrella obediently, and even used his other hand.

A clear and bright, but arrogant, laugh resounded, and echoed in the snowy plains.

Su Li looked at the great demon army in the snowy wind and looked at the shadow. After pausing for a while, he said loudly, "Look at the strike!"

This was the first true strike since the Heaven Shrouding Sword had reappeared in the world.

It was also the most powerful strike of the several days being surrounded by the demons.

In the snowy wind, the mountainous bodies of the Demon Generals became extremely serious. The tens of thousands of demon soldiers even further out became silent.

The shadow that originated from Xuelao City and covered half the sky became much more serious.

The strike inevitably contained the cultivation of Su Li's entire life.

Even the Demon Lord felt fear.

The violent wind suddenly swept through the flying snow, and the sword intent that enveloped the snowy plains was suddenly compressed. It turned into sword energy with an unimaginable power, which chopped at the world.

Su Li struck out.

He struck at the sky.

However, it was not at the shadow in the sky, but half the sky that was opposite of the shadow.

The sky of the south.

There was only a soft screech.

Of the several thousand Essence Qi Locks that the Demon race had set down in the snowy air, all were shattered by the sword intent.

In the snow and wind that suddenly became violent, an extremely clear path formed from a sword suddenly appeared to lead a way out of the snowy plains.

Su Li, with an unimaginable speed, transformed into a streak of light, and flew into the path formed from a sword.

His left hand grasped the Yellow Paper Umbrella, and Chen Changsheng was suspended on the front part of the umbrella. His body was already floating.

With a whistling sound, Su Li and Chen Changsheng turned into a black smear, slowly traveling further and further away.

A moment later, the path formed from the sword disappeared along with the two of them.

# Chapter 351 - The Junior Martial Uncle Of Mount Li That Makes Others Speechless

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The snowstorm gradually calmed and the snowy plains were peaceful and silent. However, not too much time passed before the ground began to shake and the mantle of snow began to loosen. Countless demon soldiers swept through the area, headed south in pursuit. The shadow in the sky slowly returned to Xuelao City. At some point, Black Robe had returned to the scene, with several Demon Generals standing silently behind him. Silence once again reigned over the field, with not a single sound to be heard for a very long time. The powerful demons seemed as if they had no idea what they should say. Who could have thought that the most powerful expert of the continent's south was actually this sort of person?

"For a true expert to suddenly act so shamelessly is truly rather annoying."

Black Robe's voice was as emotionless as ever. A random gust of cold wind blew past and lifted up a corner of his hood, revealing his green-tinged lower jaw. The Demon Generals agreed with Black Robe deep down. For someone as strong as Su Li to actually use such a lowly trick, it truly would have surpassed their expectations. Perhaps this was the principle that the lowest individual had no enemies?

Black Robe gazed at the trail Su Li had left behind in the snow. After a long period of silence, he continued to indifferently say, "He is already heavily wounded. Although he managed to conceal himself from His Majesty's eyes, that final sword strike of his has

by necessity used up his heart's blood. He has nothing left to support himself."

One sword could not actually travel ten thousand li, but it was enough to cleave a sword path several hundred li long through the layers upon layers of formations set up by the demon experts. One could also imagine just how powerful this sword was. It was just as Black Robe had concluded: even with someone as powerful as Su Li wielding the sword, an appropriately enormous price still had to be paid.

Six hundred li southwest of Xuelao City was a snow-covered mountain ridge. The frigid climate was not able to freeze everything. This mountain ridge was pervaded with white steam, as it contained many hot springs. A squall of snow suddenly erupted by one of the hot springs. As the snowflakes gently drifted down, the figures of Su Li and Chen Changsheng gradually emerged.

Su Li had already returned the sword into the Yellow Paper Umbrella. His right hand lightly brushed off the snow that had fallen on the surface of the umbrella, his manner casual and indifferent. In comparison, Chen Changsheng seemed much more miserable. His hands still tightly clutched the front portion of the Yellow Paper Umbrella. Sitting in the snow, he looked just like a beggar asking for alms.

"Demons are clearly rather intelligent, but for some reason, they always act so stupidly. Those Demon Generals will definitely bring their soldiers due south in pursuit." Su Li turned his head and glanced at the path he had taken here. His gaze, as sharp as a sword

ray, pierced through the layers of wind and snow, resting at some place in the distance. The corners of his lips perked up in an expression of ridicule.

These words were not meant for Chen Changsheng. He was talking to himself, or perhaps consoling himself. But Chen Changsheng did not know this, so he somewhat laboriously clambered up from the snow and said, "Senior, this place is still within the demon territory. We should leave as soon as possible."

Su Li seemed like he had just noticed the existence of this youth. He shot him a glance, but did not say anything, nor did he seem in a rush to leave. On the contrary, he walked towards the hot spring beside them.

Chen Changsheng loosened his grip on the Yellow Paper Umbrella and stared at the man that had just walked into the hot spring, not understanding what was going on.

Suddenly, a cacophony of noise burst out around the hot spring. Some of the sounds were extremely shrill, like sharp sword rays slicing through the air. Other sounds were extremely loud and clear, like the booms of iron hammers falling on stone. And some of the sounds were extremely muffled, like the sound of someone talking heard through several thousand zhang of deep water.

With the clattering of sounds, countless powerful Qis floated out of Su Li's body. These were the sword intents from the metal swords of the Demon Generals, the storming intent of the metal staff, and the sinister intent of Black Robe. The rocks all around the hot spring were frozen solid by the cold, then one by one, they

shattered.

The snowy mountain ridge resounded with the whistling of swords and peals of thunder. Even the gurgling hot springs enveloped in white steam were covered with countless cracks. Only after a long time was calm restored to the mountain ridge. Su Li stood in the hot spring that did not even reach up to his knees, his long gown in tatters and his body covered in countless wounds while blood incessantly flowed out.

In the place close to Xuelao City, besieged by tens of thousands of demon soldiers, attacked by over ten Demon Generals, calmly observed by the demon Military Advisor Black Robe, and with the will of the Demon Lord enveloping the sky as a shadow—this was the greatest assassination in the past several hundred years. Moreover, Su Li had persevered for several days.

His clothes had no tears and not even a speck of snow. He simply did not seem like someone who had been heavily injured. However, the truth was that he had already suffered many severe injuries. The Demon Generals that he had beheaded, his exchange with Black Robe, and even the will of the Demon Lord had left numerous injuries and killing intents within his body.

It was just that he had used his valiant will and superb cultivation to forcefully suppress these injuries and killing intents. It was only when he obtained the Yellow Paper Umbrella, took out the Heaven Shrouding Sword, cut a path through the snow, arrived at this place several hundred li away, and confirmed that he would be safe for the moment, that he was finally unwilling to consume his true essence to suppress it all.

Thus, the injuries and killing intents all exploded out in that instant.

The vast majority of the killing intent had been forcefully gifted by him to the snow-covered ridge, letting the world bear them all in his place, but the injuries still remained on his body.

His face was snow-white, his expression wearied. But his appearance was still as unruly as ever.

Hearing the whistling of swords and the rolling thunder, feeling the overflowing of that terrifying and cold killing intent, and seeing Su Li covered in blood and the hot spring gradually being dyed red, Chen Changsheng was so shocked that his face lost color. His voice slightly trembling, he asked, "Senior... is Senior okay?"

Su Li did not answer his question, but instead asked his own. "Are the Mount Li disciples that were inside the Garden of Zhou okay?"

Chen Changsheng shook his head. "I don't know."

Su Li silently gazed at the pale sun that was so far from the snowy mountain ridge, thinking about something or the other.

Chen Changsheng was extremely concerned and asked once more, "Is Senior okay?"

Su Li turned his body to look at him and asked, "Do you know who I am?"

Chen Changsheng had previously thought he had guessed at the identity of this senior, but later on, the actions displayed by this senior were a far cry from what had been said about him. At that moment, he directly began to doubt his own life, so naturally, he also began to suspect that he had guessed wrong. He hesitantly asked, "May I ask Senior for his distinguished name?"

Su Li replied, "I am Su Li."

Chen Changsheng was extraordinarily astonished, not imagining that he had guessed directly, that he truly had guessed right.

Because he had never imagined that the legendary Junior Martial Uncle of Mount Li was actually this sort of person.

"And then?" he asked.

Su Li was somewhat displeased and said reprovingly, "This order isn't correct. Let's go again."

Chen Changsheng was at a loss. "Ah?"

Su Li stared into his eyes and asked once more, "Who am I?"

Chen Changsheng gazed vacantly back and said, "Senior is... the

Junior Martial Uncle of Mount Li, Su Li."

Su Li asked, "In the tales, what sort of person am I?"

Chen Changsheng did not understand why this senior covered in blood and fatigued to the extreme would ask these sorts of questions. After thinking about it, he still sincerely answered, "Senior is a rarely-seen genius of the path of the sword. Senior has cultivated to the height of perfection since long ago and could be considered a legend."

On the face of it, this evaluation could very easily be taken as flattery, but Chen Changsheng said it very sincerely because what he said was the truth. As a consequence, the words that emerged from his lips seemed especially honest and trustworthy, causing Su Li to feel incredibly satisfied.

He looked at Chen Changsheng and said happily, "Junior, although your strength is absolutely terrible, you can still be considered to have some experience."

At this point, Chen Changsheng really did not know what to say. Seeing that more and more blood was flowing out of the wounds, he could not help but ask once more, "Senior, is Senior really okay!?"

Su Li smiled and said, "You just said, I'm a rarely-seen genius of the path of the sword, I cultivated to the height of perfection since long ago and could be considered a legend."

Chen Changsheng thought to himself, for him to remember every last word I said, it seems like there's nothing too serious.

"So for a person like me, how could I not be okay?"

Su Li said these words with a jubilant air.

Then, like a stone pillar being chopped down, he fell forward, splashing into the hot spring.

Water splashed everywhere. The hot spring dyed red rippled while Su Li's body bobbed up and down in the water.

It took a moment for Chen Changsheng to understand that this senior had fallen unconscious. He hurriedly rushed into the hot spring and picked him up, then placed him on the ground by the edge of the hot spring.

At practically the same moment his body hit the ground, Su Li began to snore. To hold on until now had truly made him very tired.

Chen Changsheng did not know about this point. Looking at this senior, he really did not know how to think.

The words he had previously spoken were true.

In the minds of the current generation of young cultivators,

although Su Li was not ranked amongst the Storms of the Eight Directions nor did he carry the title of Saint, he was their idol. Not even someone as egotistical as Tang Thirty-Six had any objection. This was because in comparison to the solemn and divine Saints like the Divine Empress and the Pope, or in comparison to the inflexible Eight Storms like the Divination Elder and the Solitary Drunk Under the Moon, the Junior Martial Uncle of Mount Li wandered the four seas, his sword singing everywhere. To these youths, he represented their yearning for freedom and living as they pleased.

And yet... the Junior Martial Uncle of Mount Li was actually such a person.

Chen Changsheng could not keep track of how many times he had been afflicted by this emotion.

He felt that the shock brought about by this senior was even greater than the ones delivered by the Sword Pool and the Heavenly Tome Monoliths in the Garden of Zhou.

Seeing the carefree expression on Su Li's face and hearing his thunderous roars, he suddenly felt that Su Li was very similar to Tang Thirty-Six.

Then, he thought about that evaluation Tang Thirty-Six once gave about him, that he and Xu Yourong were both people that made others speechless.

It should have been this Junior Martial Uncle of Mount Li who

really causes speechlessness in others, right?

# Chapter 352 - The God And Human By The Hot Spring

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Perhaps because of his heavy injuries, or because he had bathed in the hot spring, Su Li's face was slightly swollen. His eyes were tightly closed, and his heroic spirit dispersed. The sharp sword glow that had always made Chen Changsheng unable to directly stare at him disappeared somewhere, and he seemed like an ordinary person.

Just at that moment, the spiritual soul of the Black Dragon left the dagger, and returned to the jade ruyi that was tied to his wrist. It turned into a black dragon that seemed real and flew to Chen Changsheng's shoulder. It looked at the surrounding snowy mountains and said blankly, "Where is this place? Have we left the Garden of Zhou?"

Chen Changsheng shook his head, "I also don't know what happened. As soon as I came out, I was met with such a great situation."

When the Black Dragon was in the dagger, it could only sense the outside world through Chen Changsheng's spiritual sense, so it did not know what had happened. It was confused and asked, "What situation?"

"The Yellow Paper Umbrella was taken by the senior, and was actually a sword... of course, that's not important. Before on the snowy plains, the demon man that was wrapped in black robes may have been the demon Military Advisor from the rumors. And the dozen or so Demon Generals were each as strong as Teng

Xiaoming and Liu Wan'er. And the shadow, I really suspect that it was the Demon Lord.”

Chen Changsheng gave a simple description of the situation on the snowy plains. Hearing it, the Black Dragon was shocked speechless. Not to mention that it was currently a weak spiritual soul, even if it had returned to its real body—the Black Frost Dragon that was under the New North Bridge—meeting great figures at the level of Black Robe and the Demon Lord meant only death.

It looked towards the sleeping, middle-aged man by the hot spring and asked, “Then who is this human? Actually able to live, and escape with you?”

Chen Changsheng said, “He is the Junior Martial Uncle of Mount Li, Su Li.”

Hearing the name, the body of the Black Dragon began to tremble. It gave out a clear cry, and the jade ruyi seemed like it was about to shatter.

Chen Changsheng was confused and asked, “What’s wrong?”

The Black Dragon looked at Su Li, and its bewitching, vertical pupils retracted slightly. It seemed extremely afraid and said, “He is very strong.”

Chen Changsheng thought about the snowy plains. When Su Li’s

hand landed on the sword hilt, it killed a Demon General. When half of the sword left the sheath, it heavily injured Black Robe. He thought that although the way the senior did things was rather wretched and absurd, his level in the path of the sword and his level of cultivation were indeed extremely great. It was just that the Black Dragon also was an extremely prideful, overbearing and divine existence, so why did it become so scared after hearing his name?

“I have never seen him, but I know he... had killed many dragons.”

The Black Dragon looked at the Yellow Paper Umbrella in Su Li's hands, and became a spiritual soul again with any hesitation. It hid itself in the dagger, and no matter how Chen Changsheng called for it, it was unwilling to come out.

Chen Changsheng was very confused, and felt rather helpless. He looked at Su Li, and discovered that even though he was deep asleep, the senior continued to grasp the Yellow Paper Umbrella tightly, unwilling to let go.

Afterwards, he thought about what Su Li had said before he fell asleep. He did not know the current situation of the Garden of Zhou, whether the people had escaped properly. He did not know whether Zhexiu and Qi Jian were still alive, or if the Mount Li Sword Sect disciple Liang Xiaoxiao who had betrayed the humans and worked with the demons was dead or alive. Also... how was she right now? Was she fine?

He worried very much about it, and was also very impatient

about it. He wanted to quickly return to Hanqiu City or the capital, and confirm how the people he cared for were. At the same time, he wanted to tell the people that cared for him that he was safe and sound without any problems. Otherwise... once Luoluo learned about what happened in the Garden of Zhou, just how worried would she be?

However, how could he leave right now?

Hearing that snoring that was like thunder, he shook his head rather helplessly. He squatted down next to Su Li, and began to observe his injuries—no matter how impatient he was to leave, he could not just leave the senior behind. Even though he was also very tired, and all his true essence had already been consumed, he still needed to continue enduring it, because the senior was obviously dying.

Su Li's clothes were in tatters. The injuries and sword intent that had burst forth before revealed his body. He was covered in injuries, injuries that were left by the burning of extremely pure energy. Burns were Chen Changsheng's specialty in his medical expertise, and he was very experienced. However, for a moment, he still did not know how to treat them.

Also, he currently did not have any medicine or medical equipment, not even a cloth to wrap the wounds. The only thing he could use was the golden needle that was wrapped around his finger.

The golden needle passed through the thick mist and was about to pierce into Su Li's neck. It penetrated his skin slowly but firmly.

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What comforted Chen Changsheng slightly was that not long after he used the needle, Su Li woke up. It seemed the cultivation level of the senior indeed was different from normal cultivators, and such heavy injuries did not mean anything to him. If this was the case, perhaps they could leave soon...

Su Li glanced at him. His expression was cold, and it was indifferent and alienating, like a stranger. Chen Changsheng could accept this; he and the senior were originally strangers. It was just that the condescension in the depths of his pupils gave the feeling of a god looking at an ant, which still made him rather uncomfortable.

In the next moment, Su Li's cold and alienating expression slowly disappeared. Perhaps it was because Chen Changsheng had not left while he was asleep, and wanted to think of an idea to treat him. It made him rather satisfied.

“Who are you?” he looked at Chen Changsheng and said.

Before he fell asleep, Su Li had asked it many times: ‘Who am I?’ He obviously knew the answer, and only wanted to use the question to make Chen Changsheng judge that he was arrogant: ‘I am a peerless expert, how can I have problems?’ This was the first time he had thought of asking for the name of the teenager.

Chen Changsheng thought about it, and decided to reply honestly. However, before he had said anything, Su Li followed, “Who you are is not important. What I want to say is that although the sword is mine without saying, since you delivered it to me, I have decided to pass a sword technique to you to express my gratitude.”

Su Li stood up and looked at the Yellow Paper Umbrella. Chen Changsheng did not know what he was thinking about.

Chen Changsheng stood up behind him, and seemed rather hesitant.

Su Li did not turn around, and he said coldly, “You don’t need to shed tears of gratitude, nor do you need to tell me what sect or school you come from. Don’t try to get a connection with me and try to get even more benefits.”

The moment he finished speaking, Chen Changsheng said without hesitating, “Orthodox Academy, Chen Changsheng.”

He knew about the relationship of the Orthodox Academy and the Mount Li Sword Sect very clearly, or to be more exact, his relationship with the Mount Li Sword Sect was not that great. It could even be called extremely terrible. However, he did not want to lie, but the way the senior from Mount Li did things made him rather unhappy. As a result, he said it, and even said it extremely loudly.

It was slightly cold in the snowy mountains, and extremely quiet by the hot springs.

Su Li stood on the rock by the springs and said expressionlessly, “I give you one more chance.”

Chen Changsheng looked at his back, and felt slightly cold. However, he received energy from somewhere, which made him say it again, “Orthodox Academy, Chen Changsheng.”

This time, his voice was even louder, but his tone was much calmer.

Su Li slowly turned around and stared into his eyes as if from high above. He said, “Looks like you are a person who does not value his opportunities.”

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# Chapter 353 - A Senior And Junior In The Snow

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Before even reaching the age of sixteen years old, he had already managed to enter the upper level of Ethereal Opening, thus setting a record together with Xu Yourong. In this generation, Chen Changsheng was undoubtedly a genius. Even when compared to those peerless experts throughout history in their similar periods of youth, he was not one bit inferior. However, he was still merely a youth.

The distance between him and Su Li was incomparably far, like a vast ocean. If one were to take Wang Po of Tianliang, Painted Armor Xiao Zhang, Liang Wangsun—the experts on the Proclamation of Liberation—and throw them into this ocean, they still would fail to bridge the gap. In the world of cultivation, Su Li was a god, and he was but a mere mortal before a god.

To be lectured on high from such a godlike senior, any other young junior would have long ago bowed down and admitted their wrongs, or perhaps dared not speak out of anxiety. At this time, Chen Changsheng was also very nervous and his body was slightly shaking, but his voice was calm and firm. "I don't understand Senior's meaning."

He treasured his life and his time and felt that speaking lies was an exceedingly uneconomical means of communication, so he had always desired to speak to the truth. The words that he spoke were true. He did not know what "chance" Su Li was speaking of. That sword technique that he had been preparing to pass down to him? Or the chance to leave here alive?

Su Li looked at him and impassively asked, "Who am I?"

This time, Chen Changsheng had learned his lesson, so he naturally would not make the same mistake he had at the start. However, his mood was currently not too good, so he obstinately kept his mouth shut, unwilling to answer.

Su Li had clearly encountered this situation many times before. Without a hint of awkwardness on his face, he very naturally pointed at his own face and answered his own question, "I am Mount Li's Su Li."

His voice suddenly got louder and grew incredibly harsh and cold. "I only need a glance to see through Black Robe's methods, so how can I not see that you are Chen Changsheng! It's because I saw that you were Chen Changsheng that I did not want you to say that you were Chen Changsheng. I let you try again, so why did you insist on saying it! Just what is your meaning!"

In the face of this explosive shout that was like a sword, Chen Changsheng felt his entire body turn cold. Senior, just what exactly do you mean?

Su Li's eyes slightly squinted as he looked at him. "If you were not Chen Changsheng of the Orthodox Academy, or if you did not say that you were Chen Changsheng of the Orthodox Academy, then I could pretend that you were not Chen Changsheng of the Orthodox Academy. Then for the act of delivering me this umbrella, I could pass down a sword technique to you without worry. Regretfully,

you've missed this opportunity."

Only after hearing these repetitious words did Chen Changsheng finally understand what this senior was thinking about. After a moment of silence, he replied, "I am Orthodox Academy's Chen Changsheng. Why can't I admit that I am Orthodox Academy's Chen Changsheng? This is more important than that opportunity Senior is talking about."

"Impossible!" Su Li swept his sleeves in rage. It was just that his sleeves were already in tatters, and moreover soaked by the waters of the hot spring, so they moved in a manner that was not at all free and easy, and actually seemed very pathetic. But Su Li cared not. He locked his eyes on Chen Changsheng and said, "To be personally instructed in a sword technique by Su Li, no matter what school's student, which sect's disciple, they would all be both surprised and elated, moved to tears, and bowing at my reverence! Who would be willing to pass on such a chance? That would be to spurn the starry sky itself!"

Chen Changsheng was truly without words. He thought to himself that this person's ego was such that even if Tang Thirty-Six were to live another five hundred years, he still would not be able to catch up.

Abruptly, Su Li calmed down, and his expression gradually grew icy. Gazing at Chen Changsheng expressionlessly, he said, "I get it."

Chen Changsheng continued to be speechless. I don't even get it myself, so what are you getting?

Su Li said to him scornfully, "Everyone says that amongst the present generation of juniors, your talent is exemplary and your experience is vast. How could you not know how difficult it is to have the chance to learn the sword with me? You purposefully admitted your identity so as to make it so I could not teach you my sword technique, thus... making me owe you a favor?"

Chen Changsheng thought to himself, and just what does that mean? This senior really does like to monologue too much. In addition, he's far too narcissistic—could it be that his one favor is so important?

"It's well known that Qiushan is my most favored junior. For you to make me owe you a favor today, when you and Qiushan kick up a fuss over that girl Yourong in the future, you want to use this favor to make me not say anything, or at least not take action?" Su Li smiled at him, "A youth like you... is very precocious, and very treacherous!"

It was a very cold smile, derisive and arrogant, as if it understood everything.

Chen Changsheng was silent and felt rather uncomfortable. He knew that he could not continue his speechless ways and explained, "Senior is overthinking it."

"Am I? So, you gave your name because you're noble and virtuous, not wanting to take advantage of my Mount Li? Or is it that you value your honor far more highly than learning a few

sword techniques from me? If it really is this way, then there is nothing between us, so why are you still standing there?"

Su Li looked at Chen Changsheng with a false smile and an indescribable sense of ridicule. "You snatched away the first rank on the first banner from my Mount Li disciples, and then you want to snatch away my family's Qiushan's wife? If you don't want a favor from the act of delivering the sword, then what are you still waiting for? Are you waiting for my mood to turn sour so that I might behead you with one blow?"

These words were so harsh, so cold.

Su Li's behavior, while it could not be said to be like a dog that bites the hand of the man that feeds it, was still extremely overbearing and rude. Chen Changsheng's breathing grew a little rougher as he thought to suppress his anger. He wanted to say a few more words of explanation, but in the end said nothing more. After thinking in silence for a few moments, he wrapped his metal needles back around his fingers and turned and began walking away.

The snowstorm gradually stirred to life, in not much time obscuring his solitary figure.

"Yeah, beat it! If you manage to leave the demon territory alive, your luck isn't too bad."

Su Li looked in the direction that he disappeared and said mockingly, "Acting so lofty and stubborn, who is it for?"

For some reason, after saying these words, he suddenly grew quiet. He turned north and sighed into the snowy sky.

When that boy left the Garden of Zhou, he also did not mention if he made any inquiries about how that girl was doing. She was probably dead.

He took off his tattered clothes, leaving him with only a pair of underpants. He entered into the hot spring. He slowly sat down, then reclined his body.

Whether removing his clothes, walking, or even lying down, his actions were all very slow, as if even moving a fingertip was an arduous endeavor.

He leaned against the white rocks on the side of the hot spring. He extended his hand and plucked a sprig of jasmine that was growing out of a crack in the rocks, then brought it to his nose and gently sniffed it.

Who could have known that in this world ravaged by the wind and snow, there would actually grow a fresh flower? Even if this was a hot spring, just why was it precisely a jasmine flower?

He was a bit tired and could not be bothered to think about this question. Placing the Yellow Paper Umbrella on the side, he proceeded to close his eyes.

At this very moment, the tens of thousands of soldiers of the demon army, as well as those terrifying experts, were searching everywhere for his tracks.

Yet he was like a tourist on holiday, peacefully sleeping in the hot spring.

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Crunch crunch. That was the sound of shoes stepping on the snow.

Su Li opened his eyes.

From the time Chen Changsheng had left and he had reclined in the hot spring, not much time had passed.

Chen Changsheng had returned.

Su Li turned his head and said emotionlessly, "Got scared?"

Chen Changsheng did not answer. He walked to his side and squatted, once again taking the metal needles from his fingers.

Su Li said derisively, "And what of your loftiness and stubbornness? How could the junior most admired by old man Yin suddenly become so spineless? The wind gusts and the snow is cold, the forward path is hard to walk; now do you know the

meaning of fear? You'd go so far as to ignore the distinction between north and south and request that my Mount Li Sword Sect take you under its arm, and only then continue forward?"

Chen Changsheng continued to pay him no mind. He pinched the needles and stuck them once more into Su Li's neck.

The first time he had used needles on Su Li, he had sensed that it had been very easy to stick the needles into the neck. He had not encountered a single obstruction.

However, this time, he did not control his needlework, so naturally, Su Li felt some pain.

In pain, Su Li indignantly bellowed, "Just what is a bastard like you up to?!"

Chen Changsheng continued to ignore him. He took out a few medicinal herbs he had dug out from the mountain ridge and ground them into a powder. He spread the powder over the wound, then looked around. Picking up the long gown that Su Li had taken off, he ripped off a piece and then seriously and carefully began to bind Su Li's wounds.

"Just what are you doing?"

Su Li was very angry and raged, "Could it be that a little bastard like you believes that I've suffered injury and can't walk and so need your care?"

Chen Changsheng continued to take no notice of him, lowering his head and doing his own things.

Su Li felt this matter was far too absurd. In a wrathful mood, he laughed, "Do you know who I am? And just who are you? I need the care of a cripple like you!?"

Chen Changsheng said something, but it was not an answer. He gazed at the dreadful wounds on Su Li's body and wrinkled his brow. Somewhat annoyed, he said to himself, "If I had not lost so many things in the Garden of Zhou, your injuries would be much easier to treat."

Su Li was truly impatient now. He was just about to launch into an abusive rant when Chen Changsheng directly stuffed a medicinal herb into his mouth, pushing those profane words back down.

"Grrgaahh...grrrgh..."

With great difficulty, Su Li managed to choke the herb down, then said in a fury, "You! If this father could move, I would definitely cleave you down in one blow! Not even old man Yin would show me such disrespect! I can joke together with Tianhai! And you dare act like this to me!?"

Chen Changsheng was truly angry. "Senior, how can you not understand? I am treating your wounds; can you please be quieter?"

Thereby, Su Li grew quiet.

He gazed at the snowflakes as they unhurriedly fell down to the ground. After a long period of silence, he suddenly asked, "My... was my acting no good?"

Originally, everything before had been fake, an act.

Su Li knew that he was so heavily injured that it would be hard for him to walk. With the demon army behind them in pursuit, he did not want to be a burden to Chen Changsheng. Thus, he had used these methods to purposely infuriate him so that Chen Changsheng would leave before him.

Chen Changsheng's body somewhat stiffened. After a long pause, he finally replied, "...it was pretty good."

Su Li laughed at himself, then said tiredly, "Then how did you see through it?"

"I... in truth, I didn't see through it at all."

After a moment's hesitation, Chen Changsheng sincerely said, "I don't like being wronged by others, so back then I was actually very angry. I felt that Senior was too overbearing, too unreasonable, too..."

Su Li coughed twice, then said with a chuckle, "Too lowly."

Chen Changsheng did not dare to repeat that word, so he said in a low voice, "There was always a sense of... an elder having no self-respect."

Su Li's smile gradually dissipated. He asked, "Then why did you come back?"

Chen Changsheng replied, "Because, Senior, your injuries really are too severe."

He said these words in a very ordinary manner, because to him, this truly was a rather ordinary situation.

But to Su Li, it was extremely unordinary.

"In other words, you found me very annoying, and with your pride hurt, you hurriedly took your leave, but because... you found even more annoying the severity of my injuries, you... came back to treat me?"

Chen Changsheng said nothing.

At this moment, he already knew that Su Li's loathsome words and bearing were on purpose, so he was naturally no longer angry. He was just moved.

What was the mark of a worthy senior? It was not a transcendent character, not a hero without equal, nor was it someone who would battle the heavens and struggle with the earth.

This was the mark of a worthy senior.

Even if he appeared to be so lowly.

Chen Changsheng once again carried Su Li out of the hot spring. He put him on his back, not forgetting to pick up the Yellow Paper Umbrella.

On his back, Su Li sighed regretfully. "Ah, Chen Changsheng, if you continue to be so good, I don't know if that girl Yourong will find things difficult, but it will definitely be very difficult for me."

Just as he had said before, it was well-known that Qiushan Jun was his most cherished junior.

Thus, those words indubitably indicated the admiration Su Li held for Chen Changsheng.

Chen Changsheng felt somewhat embarrassed and felt the situation to be rather awkward. He wanted to find some words to dispel some of this atmosphere when suddenly he looked at the Yellow Paper Umbrella in his hand. He said, "The reason I came back, besides the fact that Senior's wounds were too heavy, was also because I remembered that this umbrella was still here."

Su Li was displeased. "This is my umbrella, so how could you forget about it?"

Chen Changsheng earnestly replied, "Senior, this umbrella was gifted to me by the Old Master of the Tang clan."

Su Li was very angry now. "This is my umbrella!"

Chen Changsheng chuckled but didn't continue to argue. "We'll talk about it after we leave the demon's territory."

With these words, he carried Su Li out of the snowy mountain ridge.

Not much later, the wind and the snow obscured their figures.

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# Chapter 354 - Waiting For A Person

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“Senior, if you wanted me to leave, you can completely say so directly. Why must you do so many things, purposefully provoking and tricking me?”

“When I, Su Li, do things, I have my reasons. Perhaps I still have to explain it to you?”

“Okay then... Senior, who is the old man Yin you spoke about before?”

“The Pope.”

“Ah... is His Reverence the Pope surnamed Yin?”

“Don’t you feel that it’s very...?”

“Senior... that’s not how I thought.”

“Then you mean to blame me.”

“Senior, before on the snowy plains, I thought you really would continue battling.”

“The Demon Lord, more than ten Demon Generals, Black Robe... and the Demon Commander, that mutant, was hiding somewhere in wait... Continue battling? You think I’m stupid huh?”

“But... before you struck, you really were very heroic. I really didn’t think you would run.”

“Methods of attack should have countless changes and should be unexpected. Then what is the spirit of the path of the sword?”

“I don’t know.”

“The spirit of the path of the sword is in the word ‘sword’.”

Chen Changsheng carried Su Li on his back, traversing mountains in the wind and snow. The conversation lasted until it was finally impossible to continue. At that moment, he felt very tired, and also very gloomy. Because of the gloominess, he felt even more tired. He thought that even though it was the same thing, carrying someone and running, just why did it have such a big difference to when he was carrying Lady Chujian in the grassland of the Garden of Zhou?

Tens of thousands of demon soldiers formed countless streams of flowing metal, advancing towards the wasteland south of Xuelao City. With enough time, the demon army definitely could search the entire snowy mountain range that had a circumference of several hundred li. However, as Black Robe looked at the great demon army that was disappearing into the wind and snow, he did not relax at all.

Just at that moment, the ground and the snowy plains began to tremble. The layer of snow that had been crushed extremely

densely by the pressure and terrifying sword intent of the experts for several nights immediately became much softer. With a deep sound, a huge monster slowly walked out of the snow and wind. With a long jaw and curled horns, it seemed extremely devilish. It was the Mountain-toppling Fiend that placed third in the Ranking of Earthly Beasts.

The body of this Mountain-toppling Fiend was extremely huge, and seemed much more majestic than the one in the Garden of Zhou. It was over forty zhang in height.

Between the curled horns of the Mountain-toppling Fiend sat a demon. The demon was very small, even smaller than ordinary, human children. Compared to the huge Mountain-toppling Fiend, he seemed even more insignificant, but for some reason, the Mountain-toppling Fiend below him was extremely obedient.

The demon wore armor which covered his entire body, including his face. On the armor were complicated images formed from golden lines, like sunflowers, but also like the most popular shape paintings in Xuelao City. On the sides of the golden images, there were many dark green objects, indistinguishable between gems or rusted bronze.

A terrifyingly overbearing Qi exuded from the cracks of the demon's armor. A pair of eyes that were like ice picks passed through the helmet, which landed on the snowy plains several dozen zhang below. The gaze landed on Black Robe's body, and what also fell was his voice. His voice was like a perfectly straight metal wire. There were no undulations in the voice, but it seemed as though there were countless broken gongs that were threaded

onto the wire. Every word he spat out was like the sound of a broken gong being hit, which was extremely ear-piercing. “According to your calculations, the assassination was flawless, which was why His Majesty agreed to your plans. Now, my race has paid such great prices. My little Hai Di has lost an arm, but that person has fled. I really want to know, just where exactly is the ‘flawless’ you are speaking about? Just how do you plan to explain it to His Majesty and me?”

In the eyes of that demon, the terrifyingly powerful second Demon General, Hai Di, was ‘his little Hai Di’.

He was naturally the commander of the demon army, the strongest under the Demon Lord in the land of demons, the Demon Commander.

Black Robe had an extremely sublime and special position in the Demon race. Although he was not a demon, he received the deep trust of the Demon Lord, and once helped the demons achieve meritorious deeds that were eternal in nature. It was even more because the entire continent knew exactly how terrifying his means for success were. Whether he was faced with humans or demons, he seemed to be able to clearly understand all secrets and grasp all emotions.

As a result, the great personages of the Demon race that had once tried to irritate his relationship with the Demon Lord all died by his hand, when he seemed to casually deal with them. At this point, it had been a long time since there had been anybody who dared to question Black Robe’s existence. Even more importantly, for some reason, Black Robe seemed to be very patient with the

Demon Commander. However, today, Black Robe did not have that much patience and ignored him. He looked at the snow and wind in the south silently.

The cold wind lifted up a corner of his black robe, which revealed a slightly blue lower jaw. For hundreds of years, it was the first time that Black Robe had designed an assassination specially for a single human expert. He simulated a whole thirty-seven times that Su Li definitely would die. However, as it turned out, Su Li actually escaped successfully. He had never failed in a scheme, so it seemed to be the first time his scheme had collapsed.

The person who collapsed the killing scheme was not the Pope, not the Divine Empress, nor was it the White Emperor couple. It was a teenager called Chen Changsheng—Black Robe or the Demon Generals would only need the movement of a finger to crush him to death. However, it was exactly because of this unremarkable child that the course of history was changed.

Black Robe understood the origin of Chen Changsheng very well, so in the scheme of the Garden of Zhou, he had never planned to kill Chen Changsheng. It was just that Su Li appeared too early, and Chen Changsheng carried that umbrella with him, which was why he was unable to send his will to the demons that infiltrated the Garden of Zhou. What was most important was that he had not anticipated that Chen Changsheng matured even faster than everyone had imagined.

The scheme of the Garden of Zhou just ended with Black Robe's failure? No, Black Robe did not think like that. As long as Su Li did not return to the human world, or speaking more accurately with

his current condition of heavy injury, as long as he did not return to Mount Li, then the scheme was still in progress.

Just like he had once said to Su Li, in the continent, there were just too many people that wanted Su Li to die. For various different reasons, countless people wished that he could die slightly earlier. The demons felt like that, and so did many humans in the human world. It was just that Su Li was just too strong, and no one dared to attempt to kill him. However, now, Su Li was already heavily injured by the demons. The powers in the human world had now gained their opportunity—the reasoned conclusion seemed rather unbelievable, as if the demons were working with the humans, but Black Robe knew very well that this was a matter that was extremely likely to occur.

It was because many years ago, something similar had already happened once.

Black Robe gazed quietly at the southwest of the snowy plains. He slightly squinted his eyes, which were slender and delicate. However, they carried cold and complicated emotions.

He thought about the disciple of Mount Li, and could not help but feel some regret. Revenge was the most interesting thing in the world. It could change a well-raised young lady with a pair of pampered hands into a demon with a pair of blood-soaked hands, and it could also turn the descendant of a famous family into a genius schemer. He did not know what other pleasant surprises the Mount Li disciple would bring.

Thinking like that, even if Su Li could return to Mount Li

successfully, the story of the Garden of Zhou would not end yet.

He extended a hand towards a glacier that was over ten li away, and grasped at the distance. With only a crack, the glacier immediately broke open. Countless pieces of sharp ice flew around in the sky that was dark blue. At the same time, a small person flew out. It was Nanke who had her eyes tightly shut and was on her last breath. Her faint green feathered wings wrapped tightly around her body. Black Robe grabbed her and ignored the mountainous Mountain-toppling Fiend and the Demon Commander behind him. Carrying her, he walked towards the depths of the wind and snow.

It was still spring in Hanqiu City, so it naturally did not snow. However, the morning that day was extremely cold, and there was frost in the forest outside the city. The dew that formed on the green leaves froze into ice beads without much time, and rolled down from the leaves. They produced sounds, one after another.

The reason for such an abnormality with the weather was that the Qi of the world behind the forest was extremely chaotic. In the mist could be seen the main entrance of the Garden of Zhou, which remained tightly shut. The rainbow that originated from Mount Li, tens of thousands of li away, constantly attempted to open the gate with the help of the formation put down by the Orthodoxy. A response actually occurred.

Inside and outside the forest, there were cultivators everywhere. Some were priests that came from the Li Palace, while others were the teachers of various sects and academies. Naturally, there were also the city guards of Hanqiu City, and the aristocratic families of

the Tianliang County that were represented by Zhu Luo. They formed a dense mass, but no one made a sound. The expression on all of their faces was extremely serious.

Time passed slowly, and as the sunlight broke through the clouds near the horizon, Hanqiu City was illuminated. The rainbow also seemed to become several times brighter.

“It opened!” From the deepest parts of the forest, before the thick mist, a priest of the Li Palace exclaimed in surprise.

With the exclamation, the crowd immediately became bustling. Many people surged towards the slowly opening gate. Between all of them, most of them were unable to enter the Garden of Zhou, but getting slightly closer would help them provide support when they needed to a short while later. Now, all the people already knew that the closing of the Garden of Zhou was a scheme of the demons, so were the disciples that entered the garden to undergo trials still okay?

Not long after, a cultivator ran out from the Garden of Zhou hurriedly. He seemed extremely panicked, and only upon seeing his master did he relax, and actually almost cried. Closely afterwards, more and more people walked out of the Garden of Zhou. They all seemed to be in rather miserable and sorry shapes, but in the end, they had survived.

The priests of the Li Palace and the officials of the imperial court stood to one side, carefully recording the number of people that exited the Garden of Zhou. There were even more personnel that disregarded that the young cultivators had not calmed down yet,

and directly went up to ask for their school and names, before calculating how many people had not left the Garden of Zhou.

There were sounds of alarm and confusion everywhere in the forest.

Zhu Luo and Mei Lisha stood outside the forest and listened to the reports of the priests and officials. Their expressions became more and more serious. From the descriptions of the cultivators that had left the Garden of Zhou, it confirmed their previous conjecture, which was one of the most horrible conjectures—the Garden of Zhou was about to be destroyed.

Time continued to pass by, and more and more people escaped from the Garden of Zhou.

However, according to the records of the priests from the Li Palace and the officials, there were still some people that had not come out.

Mei Lisha looked at the gate that grew dimmer and dimmer in the mist, and could feel the Qi that became more and more chaotic. His gaze became colder and colder.

Chen Changsheng still had not come out.

Zhu Luo looked at the carriage that was on the road outside the forest, and his gaze became slightly relaxed.

The carriage belonged to the Thirteen Divisions of Radiant Green. The window of the carriage was covered up with azure blinds, and the interior could not be seen.

Xu Yourong sat by the window silently.

She was waiting for someone to come out.

# Chapter 355 - For Reasons Of Sorrow

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Xu Yourong gazed out the window, not saying a word, waiting for that person to come out of the Garden of Zhou. Even though the azure curtain of the carriage window was let down, it could not obstruct her sight.

Time continued to pitilessly march on and the sun slowly rose up. The light in the sky gradually shifted, moving from the walls of Hanqiu City to the official road, until finally illuminating the entire world. The light pierced through the curtain, shining into the carriage and resting upon her face, making her face grow paler and paler.

After she came out of the Garden of Zhou, she immediately told archbishop Mei Lisha and Zhu Luo what had happened in the Garden of Zhou. The Garden of Zhou's sky was collapsing. There was enough time for others to escape because in the plains at the top of the Mausoleum of Zhou, a youth was using an umbrella to hold up the sky, so they should use every method to save him as soon as possible.

If she were not Xu Yourong, Mei Lisha and Zhu Luo would definitely think she had gone crazy. Yet even if she was Xu Yourong and Mei Lisha and Zhu Luo did believe her, there truly was no means of saving that solitary youth that was holding up the sky atop the Mausoleum of Zhou—only those at Ethereal Opening could enter the Garden of Zhou, and if it was as she had described, someone that could save that youth needed to be an expert at an even higher level of cultivation. Perhaps Zhu Luo had the ability, but the Garden of Zhou was in the midst of collapse and was exceptionally unstable. He would only need to take a single step

into the Garden of Zhou and the entire miniature world might be instantly annihilated.

No one could save that youth; only the youth himself could do so. Thus, Xu Yourong could do nothing else, only wait. At this moment, a senior sister from the Thirteen Divisions of Radiant Green hurried over to the window and reported to her, "There's no one called Xu Sheng. In addition, I've checked and found that no disciples came from the Snow Mountain Sect."

After a moment of silence, Xu Yourong asked, "How many people have yet to come out?"

"There are still a bit more than forty people." After a moment's hesitation, the senior from the Thirteen Divisions of Radiant Green also softly said, "Orthodox Academy's Chen Changsheng... also has not come out."

Once she said these words, the senior grew very concerned about Xu Yourong's situation. She thought Xu Yourong was worried about the safety of her fiancé, which is why she had asked to make these inquiries. Yet Xu Yourong had no reaction, making the senior somewhat surprised.

The person Xu Yourong was waiting for was not Chen Changsheng—amongst the cultivators that had registered their names, there was no Snow Mountain Sect disciple called Xu Sheng, but she knew very well that the Snow Mountain Sect disciple called Xu Sheng was still in the Garden of Zhou. Moreover, he was at this very moment at the summit of the Mausoleum of Zhou, wielding the ten thousand swords as a massive umbrella.

Entering the Garden of Zhou under a false name, even changing one's sect under the tacit approval of the Li Palace, was a very common occurrence. In her view, since Xu Sheng was the secret sect genius disciple upon which the Snow Mountain Sect placed its hopes of revitalization, then he would be like her and use some other identity to enter the Garden of Zhou. That his name could not be found on the register was highly likely.

In reality, she had no hopes that the youth's name would be found on the register. After she had gotten out of the Garden of Zhou, she had silently sat in the carriage by the window, staring into the foggy depths of the forest at each person that walked out or was carried out. She firmly believed that she had not missed a single one, because her eyes had never once blinked.

She had seen many of her senior and junior brothers from the Longevity Sect as well as some of her fellows from the South Stream Temple, saw those injured cultivators that she had saved in those nights, saw that wolf youth carrying Qi Jian that ran into four trees before finally reaching the roadside, but she never saw him.

At the end, several figures walked out of the fog supporting each other, then an unimaginably terrifying Qi erupted from the dense fog. That rainbow which landed in the fog instantly began to falter, as if it could snap at any moment. That magnificent courtyard faintly discernible through the fog abruptly twisted into countless images, like it was about to vanish.

Seeing this scene, Mei Lisha seemed to grow even older. Zhu Luo

flew up, rushing into the air above the clouds. When the rainbow finally fractured, a bright and beauteous sword light emerged from his hands and chopped at the earth, creating an incredibly powerful protective screen, separating the world in the fog from the true world.

There was a massive boom which could be heard even several hundred li from Hanqiu City.

Even Zhu Luo, one of the Eight Storms and one of the most powerful cultivators on the continent, putting his full strength behind this slash, failed to completely seal off the explosion of this powerful Qi. A hurricane gathered up the leaves and earth and rolled them into the forest, shrieking all the while. In an instant, the hurricane engulfed the official road. Only when it collided against the sturdy walls of Hanqiu City did it finally cease.

As the wind died down and the dust settled, the world became clear and bright once more. The forest was filled with coughs and groans. As the crowd looked into the forest, they saw that the dense fog had already completely scattered. As for the green hill that should have been behind that fog...it had already disappeared without a trace.

The gate to the Garden of Zhou had disappeared, and the Garden of Zhou itself had also vanished. It was a mystery whether there would be anyone else who in the future would be able to open the gate to the Garden of Zhou. Even if it could be opened, there would be no meaning. The energy that the Garden of Zhou released before its collapse had disintegrated a real green hill, so how could the Garden of Zhou itself still exist?

The forest was silent. Those birds that had taken flight in alarm had been struck dead by the Qi shot out by the destruction of the Garden of Zhou, their stiff corpses dropping down amidst the leaves and dirt.

Breaking the silence were the sounds of mournful weeping. Many teachers from the sects and schools adopted expressions of grief while there were also many young cultivators who bitterly wept without end by the corpses of their fellow disciples. The priests of the Li Palace and the government officials put away their emotions and once again began to take count. They determined that out of the human cultivators that had entered the Garden of Zhou, twenty-seven had not come out. But they did not know if these people had been killed in the course of the demons' schemes or if they had lost their lives in the destruction of the Garden of Zhou. In addition, in the forest, there were more than ten corpses.

The curtain was covered by a thick layer of dust, blocking out the light, and also blocking her sight. It also caused Xu Yourong's face to become rather darker.

She closed her eyes, her long lashes gently blinking.

She said nothing, her right hand trembling as it softly caressed the pheasant at her side.

"Let's go," she whispered.

The carriage of the Thirteen Divisions of Radiant Green,

following the official road, rolled off into the distance.

The wind on the road blew off the dust on the curtains, letting her see the scene on the side of the road of the wounded groaning on their stretchers.

This made her feel somewhat aggrieved.

In that first night in the Garden of Zhou, she and Chen Changsheng, without once meeting, had continuously saved lives. These wounded people were people that they had saved together.

And Chen Changsheng had also not come out of the Garden of Zhou.

Only then did she understand that the young Daoist boy she had exchanged letters with several years ago... was also dead.

She originally felt that she would not grieve over his death, but now she felt rather upset.

If it were not for that engagement, he would not have come to the capital, would not have participated in the Grand Examination, would not have entered the Orthodox Academy, and would not have entered the Garden of Zhou. Naturally, he also would not have died. Presumably, he would still be in that old temple in Xining village reading through those three thousand scriptures of the Dao.

She had originally long forgotten about those letters, but for some reason, she suddenly began to recall them. She remembered that Chen Changsheng used to write to her that every day, he had to recite Daoist scriptures, something he found very laborious, and yet... no matter how laborious it was, it must be better than death, right?

The wheels of the carriage rolled across the official road, rumbling along as they went. This was to leave.

Every person had to learn about leaving.

Leaving was always a most sorrowful and grievous affair. Even if she was Xu Yourong, she was still just a fifteen-year-old girl.

What made her sad most of all was that the person she was waiting for did not come out in the end.

Were you really called Xu Sheng? Were you really a disciple of the Snow Mountain Sect? Did you still not know that I was Xu Yourong? Does anyone know that in those plains, we shouldered responsibilities together, overcame life-or-death situations together, and calmly faced crises together? Your relatives and teachers might mourn for you, but I...I don't even have the qualifications to mourn for you. Ah, this is a truly sorrowful affair.

Not long after the carriage of the Thirteen Divisions of Radiant Green had taken its leave, another sorrowful affair occurred.

A person was about to die.

In this year's opening of the Garden of Zhou, because of the demons' schemes, the human cultivators had suffered disastrous casualties. By all reason, death should be a very normal affair.

However, the person that was about to die was the Mount Li Sword Sect's Liang Xiaoxiao.

This affair was no longer normal and was very grievous.

Then, this grief very quickly transformed into anger.

Because everyone on the scene believed that it was not the demons that had killed Liang Xiaoxiao, but Zhexiu.

# Chapter 356 - One Dies (Part One)

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The carriage for the Thirteen Divisions of Radiant Green left, but the female disciples stayed behind. They and the disciples of the South Stream Temple, as well as the priests from Li Palace, were all healing the injured people in the forest.

At that time, it was currently an age of blossoming flowers for the world of cultivation. Even more so, it was a great year for the Grand Examination, and with the starlight in the Mausoleum of Books, there were actually several dozen young cultivators under the age of twenty that surpassed the barrier of life and death to successfully enter Ethereal Opening. The future of the human world seemed to be extremely bright, however, nobody had expected such a great matter to occur in the visit to the Garden of Zhou. No matter if it was the Orthodoxy, the imperial court or the southern sects, they were all naturally extremely anxious.

Fortunately, the injuries of the injured were not too heavy. Most of them had been struck by the falling mountain rocks when they fled from the Garden of Zhou, so after a simple treatment, there were no great problems. Also, the several dozen cultivators from all over the empire who were heavily injured by the ambushes of the first two nights from the demons had already received treatment from Xu Yourong and Chen Changsheng, so they also did not have any great problems.

Amongst these individuals, Qi Jian suffered the greatest injury. The treacherous sword had directly pierced through her lower abdomen, which severed several of her meridians. With the pain from fleeing for several dozen days and the effects of medicine, she was currently unconscious. No one knew when she would awaken.

The expression of the elder from Mount Li who watched over her on one side was extremely ugly.

With a teacher from Mount Li looking after her, Zhexiu naturally could not approach too closely to her. However, he was not too far away either. He stood under a scholar tree not far away, and his eyes were closed. Compared to the chaotic activity in the forest, he seemed rather lonely.

Actually, he was also extremely heavily injured, especially due to the fact that the poison from Nanke had already inundated his body. However, he did not request the priests of Li Palace to treat his injuries. He did not show any expression on his slightly pale face. Ignoring the fact that he may have been denying the people, other human cultivators were also hindered by the relative rumors of him, and did not want to take the initiative to go up and ask him.

The elder from Mount Li turned around and glanced at Zhexiu. There were questioning and alertness in his gaze. He wanted to ask something, but he could not turn his head again in the end. He put his mind on the heavily injured and unconscious Qi Jian.

Qi Jian was the final disciple of the Mount Li Sword Sect master. Her identity and status were naturally different. As soon as she had left the Garden of Zhou, there were already two cardinals of the Orthodoxy that carefully attended to her wounds. They confirmed that her life was no longer under threat, but the injury was extremely heavy. Especially due to the fact of the severed meridians and that she was unconscious, they could not think of any good methods to help her, and she needed to be taken to the

capital or Mount Li as soon as possible.

The elder of Mount Li knew Qi Jian's background. What made him even more uneasy was that if she really did fall into a coma, just who knew how crazy his martial uncle would become? However, what made him feel the most uneasy and even vaguely fearful, was the sword injury in her lower abdomen.

Swords had sword intent, and there would often be traces of sword intent in injuries caused by swords. What Mount Li focused on was the sword, so the elder only needed a glance to understand just where the sword that heavily injured Qi Jian came from.

Just when he felt uneasy, there were a few cries of surprise from the depths of the forest, "Someone come quick!"

The elder of Mount Li turned around to see what was going on there. His expression suddenly changed, and he no longer could care for Qi Jian anymore. He ordered disciples to watch over her carefully, and personally rushed over. He waved his hands and made through the crowd, yelling angrily, "Just what is happening!?"

In the center of the crowd was a stretcher. The person who lay on the stretcher was Liang Xiaoxiao.

Liang Xiaoxiao was suffering from heavy injury for some reason, and there were a dozen or so sword slashes on his body. Two female disciples from the South Stream Temple helped bandage him on the side, but they were unable to stop the fresh blood from

flowing out from under the bandage. The scene seemed extremely brutal.

His face was pale like paper, his lips were blue, his gaze was gloomy and his Qi was rather weak. The teenage genius who was once valiant and heroic-looking was now only an inch away from death. The two female disciples of South Stream Temple squatted down on the two sides of the stretcher, and constantly used bandages to attempt to stop his bleeding. However, they were unable to stop the blood, so they could not help but become panicked. The slightly younger female disciple even cried, and said tearfully, “Senior Liang, you can’t die!”

The forest fell into a deathly silence. The crowd was stunned. Liang Xiaoxiao was not an ordinary cultivator. He was an inner disciple of the Mount Li Sword Sect, and a member of the Divine State’s Seven Laws. He was the first place on the first banner in the Grand Examination last year, but now, he was actually almost dead.

Just what happened? Who injured him?

A cardinal from Li Palace hurried over. He looked at the scene and could not help but be extremely shocked. He used the Sacred Light Technique without the slightest hesitation, which caused clear light to land on Liang Xiaoxiao’s body without stint.

There was silence, and the people waited anxiously. A while later, Liang Xiaoxiao’s bleeding stopped, but... his face remained pale and his gaze remained gloomy. The cardinal slowly shook his head.

Seeing the expression of the cardinal, the body of the Mount Li elder swayed a few times, before forcefully withstanding it. Through the description of some people present, he learned that Liang Xiaoxiao was carried out by Zhuang Huanyu in the end. His glanced over coldly.

“Just what happened?”

Zhuang Huanyu also had several sword slashes on his body, except not as severe. His face was also very pale, but not because of the injury. Rather, it was because his state of mind was in a flurry. Hearing the loud question of the Mount Li elder, he looked at Liang Xiaoxiao on the stretcher, and slightly hesitated.

Liang Xiaoxiao lay on the stretcher. His vigor was a little better than before, and his Qi had increased slightly. However, when the sunlight hit him, objects that seemed like small fragments of colored glass could be seen on the surface of his clothes.

This was the sign of dispersion. The Third Law of the Divine State was dying.

The forest became even more deathly silent. The feeling of depression increased slowly, and the girl from the South Stream Temple began crying again.

The Mount Li elder looked at Zhuang Huanyu and yelled angrily, “Speak!”

With the angry yell, a sword intent burst forth. It enveloped Zhuang Hanyu, as if Zhuang Huanyu had taken a little longer, the sword intent would have directly chopped him into pieces.

Zhuang Huanyu was also not an ordinary cultivator. He was a student of the Heavenly Dao Academy. However, even with that, the Mount Li elder actually ignored it completely. It displayed just how angry he was at that moment.

As the main person who presided over the opening of the Garden of Zhou this time, Zhu Luo was also at the scene. He naturally could not just let Zhuang Huanyu die like this, and said while looking at the Mount Li elder, “Calm down a little.”

Just at that moment, a weak voice could be heard from the stretcher.

“Martial Uncle, it had nothing to do with young master Huanyu.”

The Mount Li elder looked at Liang Xiaoxiao, and said with a slightly trembling voice, “Who was it that injured you so badly?”

At that moment, most of the people in the forest believed that it was the demon experts that had infiltrated the Garden of Zhou who injured Liang Xiaoxiao so heavily. After all, Liang Xiaoxiao held the first place upon the first banner of the Grand Examination from the previous year, and also had spent a whole year in the Mausoleum of Books, comprehending monoliths. His level of cultivation was extremely profound, so logically, only the demon

experts could injure him so badly.

However, the Mount Li elder knew very well that Liang Xiaoxiao was not injured by the demons. It was because he knew that the sword slashes on his body were the same as the injury in Qi Jian's lower abdomen. They were all... of the Mount Li Sword Style.

The only Mount Li Sword Sect disciples that had entered the Garden of Zhou were Qi Jian and Liang Xiaoxiao.

The Mount Li elder had a vague conjecture, but he was unable to believe it. As a result, his voice trembled very heavily.

Liang Xiaoxiao looked at his martial uncle, and shook his head slowly but firmly.

The Mount Li elder understood what he meant. An expression of disbelief appeared on his face.

Liang Xiaoxiao was in the state of momentary recovery right before death. He was slightly more energetic than before, and his gaze moved slowly. When he saw Qi Jian in the distance, he paused slightly in a fashion that was hard to detect, before continuing his movement. The Mount Li elder and Zhu Luo sensed that, and even saw that in Liang Xiaoxiao's gaze towards Qi Jian, there was self-blame, frustration, distress and sorrow.

The gazes of the people followed his gaze, and vaguely understood what he was looking for.

In the end, Liang Xiaoxiao's gaze landed under a scholar tree.

The one under the scholar tree was the wolf tribe teenager.

Countless gazes also landed on his body.

Zhexiu's eyes remained closed, as if he could not sense it.

"It's him." Zhuang Huanyu's voice seemed a little dry. He said, "Wofu Zhexiu... is the demon traitor. He ambushed us in the Garden of Zhou. Senior Liang was taken advantage of in order to save me."

Hearing that, the forest first fell into a deathly silence, before becoming an uproar.

# Chapter 357 - One Dies (Part Two)

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It was silent in the forest. Countless gazes landed on Zhexiu's body, and they all varied from one another. Zhu Luo squinted his eyes slightly, and seemed to want to say something. Mei Lisha was not there at all, but where the green mountain had disappeared. He looked at the Garden of Zhou that had already disappeared, and his old face revealed an indescribable expression.

"So it's like that." The Mount Li elder looked at Zhexiu expressionlessly.

The sound of footsteps and wind appeared in the forest. It belonged to the various cultivators of the southern Longevity Sect and Holy Maiden Peak. Without any orders, they all dispersed, and slightly blocked the directions that Zhexiu could leave in. Seeing the situation, they were about to act in the next moment. Logically, it was not because Zhuang Huanyu had pointed out that Zhexiu was the demon traitor that everyone believed it without a doubt, it was that Liang Xiaoxiao who lay on the stretcher always stared at Zhexiu, staring at him with undisguised hatred and vigilance. Also, Zhexiu did not speak up against it.

Liang Xiaoxiao was a member of the Divine State's Seven Laws, and Zhuang Huanyu was a proud, brilliant student of the Heavenly Dao Academy. The testimony of the two was extremely powerful. Most importantly, Liang Xiaoxiao was currently heavily injured, and his true essence was dispersing brightly. He was about to die. No one would doubt what he said. Who could lie in the final moment before death?

Zhexiu was not a human cultivator, and did not have any association with the various cultivating sects of the Central Plains. However, he killed demons on the snowy plains and coordinated with the army of Great Zhou. He had committed a lot of meritorious deeds in the military, and many aristocrats in the capital admired him very much; in essence, an exchange and consideration of interest. However, that did not stop some people siding with him.

The status of Li Palace was relatively higher. The cardinal who had helped heal Liang Xiaoxiao furrowed his eyebrows slightly, and thought in his heart that the sword slashes on Liang Xiaoxiao's body did not seem like the killing method that Zhexiu was good at. He said hesitantly, "I think what was most fatal... should be the sword wounds."

A lecturer from Star Seizer Academy looked at Zhuang Huanyu and said with a cold expression, "Indeed, how do you explain it? Zhexiu has performed meritorious military service time after time, and who knows how many demons he has killed on the snowy plains. You actually say that he worked with the demons to enter the Garden of Zhou to kill people. How would people believe you?"

It was indeed like that. Especially with the sword wounds on Liang Xiaoxiao's body, it clearly was not done by Zhexiu. This deepened the doubt even more. Many people looked at Zhuang Huanyu once again, wanting to hear how he would explain it. Zhuang Huanyu hesitated slightly before saying, "Perhaps, he has always been hiding it the years before, just to gain our trust from the meritorious deeds."

“Pointing at people for working with the demons cannot be said with the word ‘perhaps’,” the lecturer from the Star Seizer Academy said without any respect, as if he did not care about his identity at all.

Both of Zhuang Huanyu’s eyes were slightly blood-shot, perhaps due to worry or anger. He opened his mouth as if he wanted to say something, but he did not do it in the end, and seemed to subconsciously glance at the stretcher.

Liang Xiaoxiao shooked his head with difficulty and said, “Speak no more.”

The Mount Li elder saw what happened, and vaguely understood that his conjecture had turned into the truth. His complexion became extremely pale, and his body became slightly cold. Listening to Liang Xiaoxiao’s weak voice, Zhuang Huanyu tightly closed his mouth. His complexion also paled and his body became slightly cold, except his coldness and the coldness of the elder from Mount Li were different.

Looking at Liang Xiaoxiao who lay on the stretcher, covered in blood, he thought about the conversation he had in the Garden of Zhou before and the several dozen mournful sword rays. He could not help but feel cold inside.

At that time, outside the Mountainside Whispering Wood, Liang Xiaoxiao saw the scene of Zhexiu carrying Qi Jian out of the Garden of Zhou. He briefed Zhuang Huanyu over some things very calmly, before pulling out his sword from the sheath without the slightest sign of hesitation. He then used an extremely powerful

sword move.

The sword move was the final move of the Mount Li Sword Style, the most heroic and absolute move. Using the sword move could bring great harm to the opponent, but the user himself would definitely die under the sword. Before, in the Grand Examination, the reason Gou Hanshi conceded in the end was that he saw that Chen Changsheng had decided to use the sword move.

Liang Xiaoxiao used such a grim and tragic move on himself.

Zhuang Huanyu was shocked to the point where he only stared blankly. He had never seen such a grim person who was so grim and so fierce to himself, so what about to other people?

Yes, this was an immediate scheme Liang Xiaoxiao had come up with. He used death and his sword wounds to denounce Zhexiu and Qi Jian as working with the demons, making both sides suffer.

He did not say Qi Jian's name in front of so many people, because he loved her as a friend, and deeply believed that the name of the sect was more important than the life of a Mount Li disciple. Even if he was about to die, he did not wish for Mount Li's great reputation to suffer any damage, still taking pity on his youngest junior.

It was also exactly because that he was like that, that his word was even more believable. Using his death to exchange for benefits, Liang Xiaoxiao really was very terrifying. Most terrifyingly, before he made the decision, he did not hesitate at all,

and seemed as if he did not care whether Zhuang Huanyu would act out his plans at all.

Liang Xiaoxiao using his death to construct a scheme caused Zhuang Huanyu to feel extremely terrified. He wanted to flee, however, he knew that he could not flee. Ever since the moment on the lake shore, when Chen Changsheng and the other two were ambushed by Liang Xiaoxiao and the demon experts, and he had not appeared, he had taken the fork in the road.

At many moments in the past, he had the opportunity to correct the direction he traveled in, including right now. He could tell the truth, however... if he did that, he would be seen as a coward. As a result, he did not, so afterwards, he needed to continue traveling along that path, unable to look back.

The opposing seemed to have already guessed his choice since the very start.

Looking at Liang Xiaoxiao who lay on the stretcher, covered in blood and on his last breath, Zhuang Huanyu felt that he had seen a devil.

Liang Xiaoxiao also looked at him. His gaze was rather gloomy, but it was very peaceful.

The moment their eyes had connected, everything was settled.

Zhuang Huanyu said nothing and slowly lowered his head. He

said with a slightly trembling voice, “Sorry, I can’t say anything.”

In the eyes of everyone, Zhuang Huanyu seemed very sad, and also seemed to be very unwilling.

He could not say anything, but actually had already conveyed a lot, which was even more terrifying than speaking.

Zhu Luo slightly raised an eyebrow and looked to the ground at Qi Jian who was still unconscious.

Qi Jian did not know what was happening at all.

“What do you have to say?”

A new lecturer of the Heavenly Dao Academy walked into the crowd. Hearing the situation, his expression became slightly cold, and asked Zhexiu while looking under the tree.

Zhexiu said expressionlessly, “Liang Xiaoxiao is the demon traitor... but I did not kill him.”

The crowd fell into an uproar again, and the elder of Mount Li asked with a cold expression, “What did you say?”

Zhexiu described what had happened by the lake. He was not good at speaking and spoke very slowly, but also because of that, it instead was rather believable.

The lecturer from the Star Seizer Academy asked, “Do you have a witness for what you have said?”

Zhexiu and Liang Xiaoxiao accused each other of being the demon traitor. They naturally did not have any evidence, so they could only look for witnesses.

Not many people present believed in what Zhexiu had said. What the Star Seizer Academy lecturer asked was a chance that Zhexiu had to seize without a doubt.

Zhexiu stayed silent for a while before saying, “I know you don’t believe what I have said. Wait until Qi Jian wakes up, and you all will naturally know.”

As the gazes of the crowd turned to him, the cardinal shook his head and said, “Too heavily injured, and the meridians have some heavy problems. Don’t know when he’ll wake up, even...”

Zhuang Huanyu sneered and said with grief and indignation, “Unable to wake up so you...”

Both of them did not finish what they were saying, but the crowd understood what the two were implying.

It was possible that Qi Jian would never wake up.

In that case, Zhuang Huanyu would be overjoyed.

It was still like that saying: sometimes, not speaking or not explaining completely was far more harmful than speaking clearly.

With the details and the injuries on Liang Xiaoxiao's body, most of the people already believed that they were able to guess roughly what the scheme that occurred in the Garden of Zhou was, why Zhuang Huanyu was so grieved and indignant, why he wanted to speak but then stopped, why Liang Xiaoxiao was about to die, but instead remained unwilling to say any more.

"According to what Zhexiu has said, you were not there at the time," the lecturer of the Star Seizer Academy said while looking at Zhuang Huanyu.

Zhuang Huanyu said nothing for a very long time. Finally, he raised his head and made his choice. As a result, he seemed very calm.

To make the choice between being a coward forever, or being a warrior for a while. It was very easy.

He had already been a coward once, so in the story he told, he obviously was a warrior.

Although he knew very clearly that these were the actions of a coward.

Listening to Zhuang Huanyu tell his story, the crowd became quiet again.

Under the scholar tree, Zhexiu could feel the gazes that originated from his surroundings, and he could feel the pressure that slowly became real. He slightly lowered his head, and was very confused.

At that moment, he could not see, so he was even more confused by how humans could speak so brazenly.

In order to lie successfully, there needed to be even more lies to prevent any holes from occurring. The story Zhuang Huanyu had told completely originated from the fabrication that Liang Xiaoxiao came up with in a very short time, so he was obviously unable to keep all the details straight perfectly. Zhu Luo, who was always silent, suddenly said, “Chen Changsheng was also there?”

In the story Zhexiu had told, Chen Changsheng played an extremely important role. In Zhuang Huanyu’s story, Chen Changsheng did appear, but he was gone in a few words. Zhexiu did not understand and said, “Yes, Chen Changsheng can testify.”

The lecturer from the Heavenly Dao Academy looked at him and furrowed his brows slightly. He said, “Chen Changsheng did not exit from the Garden of Zhou, and should have already died... you know this, so why did you purposely say it?”

Hearing that Chen Changsheng had died in the Garden of Zhou, Zhexiu became silent and did not say anything more.

Liang Xiaoxiao's voice became weaker and weaker, "So he couldn't leave the Garden of Zhou, then there's nothing else."

After saying that, he sighed. It was slightly regretful, slightly pleased, slightly disappointed; in general, very complicated.

The forest became quiet again, and the crowd was shocked speechless.

Perhaps... in the matter of Zhexiu working with the demons, Chen Changsheng actually also participated in it?

How could a perfect lie be created? It was not to constantly fill it up with new lies, but like a painting, some areas should be left blank, giving people space to fill in the gaps themselves.

This was what Liang Xiaoxiao did, and it was very successful.

Of course, until the current moment, the lie was still not perfect, because the words of the living were still not as convincing as the words of the dead in the end—life was the most valuable thing in the world, and the accusation made with life was the most powerful. Many times, it was even more powerful than the truth.

Only if Liang Xiaoxiao died at this moment would his set up against Zhexiu, Qi Jian and Chen Changsheng be considered perfect.

He closed his eyes and smiled in a rather tired manner.

He displayed many complicated emotions on his face. There was unwillingness, grief, relief and... forgiveness.

Then, he died.

# Chapter 358 - Striding Through The Snowy Plains

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The elder from Mount Li gazed silently at Liang Xiaoxiao for a very long time, then turned to Zhexiu under the scholar tree and asked emotionlessly, "Do you have anything else to say?"

Zhexiu closed his eyes and said, "Since he relied on the demons, anyone could kill him. If it were me that killed him, I would not need to conceal myself. But, I was not the one who killed him."

The forest grew restless. The Mount Li elder's face was like ice as he frigidly said, "Martial Nephew Liang is already dead and you actually dare to splash the departed's body with filthy water? That's really too shameless."

Only now was Zhexiu finally aware that Liang Xiaoxiao was dead. He roughly understood the entire situation and suddenly felt thoroughly exhausted.

"Take him with us to Mount Li so we can interrogate him." The Mount Li elder looked at Zhexiu like he was looking at a dead man.

At his words, more than ten Longevity Sect disciples encircled Zhexiu. Around them were even more cultivators from the south, watching Zhexiu's actions to prevent him from suddenly putting up a fight.

Just then, Zhu Luo impassively said, "Slow yourselves."

The Storms of the Eight Directions were humanity's strongest cultivators, so their status was naturally special. His words even caused that Mount Li elder whose rage had reached its peak to temporarily cool down.

"I most detest these sorts of scenes where matters are taken care of without anything being made clear."

Zhu Luo pointed at the unconscious Qi Jian and asked, "By your reasoning, the only culprits for killing Liang Xiaoxiao, besides Zhexiu, are Qi Jian and even Chen Changsheng?"

The Mount Li elder slowly said, "This is Mount Li's affair and I would ask that Sir respect it."

"This is not Mount Li's affair, it regards a matter that occurred within the Garden of Zhou." Zhu Luo gave him in an indifferent look and continued, "Because I am presiding over this year's opening of the Garden of Zhou, anything that happened within must be made clear by me."

Restraining his anger, the Mount Li elder asked, "Could it be that you still don't understand this matter?"

"Exceedingly so." Zhu Luo cared not one bit for the elder's response and casually continued, "Zhixiu has performed much military service for my Great Zhou. You accuse him of colluding with the demons? Fine. But if Qi Jian also participated in this matter, then could it be that he has also thrown his lot in with the

demons? He is also a disciple of your Mount Li. For what reason would he join hands with this wolf youth and deal with his own senior brother?"

The Mount Li elder thought about the meaning behind Liang Xiaoxiao's gaze before he died. After a moment of silence, he walked over to Zhu Luo and whispered, "This matter involves the good name of Mount Li. I request Sir not to inquire any further."

Zhu Luo slightly raised his brow. It must be known that while reputation and good name seemed to have similar meanings, there was a subtle difference.

The Mount Li elder continued to suppress his voice. "Martial Nephew Qi Jian... although we temporarily don't know what happened between him and Zhexiu, we absolutely cannot inquire about it in front of all these people. Because his identity is very special."

This conversation could only be heard by the two of them. Zhu Luo was very cautious with him and asked, "His identity?"

After a moment of silence, the Mount Li elder replied, "He... is actually a girl."

Looking at Zhexiu under the scholar tree, Zhu Luo seemed to understand. "No wonder it has to do with your good name."

The Mount Li elder said, "I continue to ask Sir for your

understanding."

Zhu Luo shook his head. "This is still not enough. It is true that Mount Li's reputation is important, but not more important than truth or life and death.

The Mount Li elder hesitated for a few moments, then finally clenched his teeth and said, "She is Martial Uncle's daughter."

Zhu Luo's expression became a little more severe. He looked into the elder's eyes and asked, "Which martial uncle?"

The Mount Li elder whispered, "Junior Martial Uncle."

At these three words, Zhu Luo fell into a long period of silence.

The Storms of the Eight Directions possessed a supremely majestic position in the human world, only sitting below the Five Saints. Logically, no name would make him feel fear, but there was one name that was an exception.

So she was Su Li's daughter, actually Su Li's daughter. No wonder Mount Li's Sect Master took her as his last disciple, all of Mount Li seemed to treat her as a treasure, and even Qiushan Jun and Gou Hanshi held her in the palms of their hands.

Gazing at the unconscious Qi Jian as he thought of these things, Zhu Luo shook his head.

The Mount Li elder said, "Many thanks to Sir for his understanding. Of course, if Qi Jian truly did use her sword in the Garden of Zhou, the Discipline Hall will absolutely use the rules of the sect. We will communicate the final result to Sir as speedily as possible."

Zhu Luo said nothing, indicating his approval. This truly was something that had happened in the Garden of Zhou, but the Mount Li Sword Sect had already brought up this matter, and moreover, Su Li was also involved. He no longer felt like taking on this matter.

But on this scene, besides him, there was still one other venerable elder whose words had the most power.

With a signal from the elder of the Mount Li Sword Sect, people carried away the stretchers holding Qi Jian and Liang Xiaoxiao. Zhexiu inclined his ear and heard activity from that location. His body slightly leaned forward as if he was prepared to do something, but in the end, he did not do anything.

As the Mount Li Sword Sect was prepared to also take Zhexiu away, the other venerable elder finally spoke.

From the time the Garden of Zhou had been destroyed and that green hill vanished without a trace, archbishop Mei Lisha had been staring vacantly at that place once filled with dense fog. His elderly face had further aged, his turbid eyes grown even muddier. He had not paid any attention to what was going on in the forest, until

now. He turned around and expressionlessly said, "Leave him behind."

The Mount Li Sword Sect elder declared, "This is my Mount Li..."

"The one who died is a disciple of your Mount Li, the opponent is also apparently a disciple of your Mount Li. I care not for the trifling internal affairs of your Mount Li. But why do you carry away Zhexiu? Because of Liang Xiaoxiao's dying words? Are you not saying that if Chen Changsheng was still alive, you would also take him away to your Mount Li?"

Mei Lisha slowly ambled back into the forest and gazed at the Mount Li elder. "Is that your reasoning?"

That Mount Li elder said nothing, but the newly appointed lecturer from the Heavenly Dao Academy hesitantly opened his mouth. "Your Eminence, if Chen Changsheng really is involved in this matter, then he would also have to be closely questioned."

"The dead can no longer speak, allowing you people to splash filthy water on his body? I seemed to have heard someone say as such just a moment ago." Mei Lisha looked at that lecturer from the Heavenly Dao Academy and emotionlessly said, "As for questioning...Chen Changsheng is the Principal of the Orthodox Academy. What right does a mere lecturer like you have to question him? Besides His Holiness, who has the right to question him?"

He glanced at Zhexiu under the scholar tree and continued, "Your

Mount Li's good name is important, but does that mean that my Orthodoxy's reputation is not important then? This matter of the wolf youth concerns the reputation of my Orthodoxy. I am taking him back with me to the capital. Are there any objections?"

Zhu Luo replied, "I have no objections."

Since not even he had an objection, no one else present had the right to have an objection, including those southern cultivators and the Mount Li elder who very clearly did have objections. Mei Lisha looked at the Mount Li elder and coldly said, "If Mount Li has an objection, let your Sect Master come and make it, or let Su Li come and make it."

The Mount Li elder could no longer restrain himself and exploded with anger. "The one who died is a disciple of my Mount Li!"

"Is a dead man so amazing? It couldn't be that just because he died, this matter is suddenly no longer riddled with errors, no longer a complete mess?" Mei Lisha's voice grew even colder. "In addition, my mood right now is very bad. His Holiness's mood is also about to be very bad; the entire Orthodoxy's mood is about to be very bad, because Chen Changsheng has died. The Principal of the Orthodox Academy, Chen Changsheng, has died!"

The old man looked out into the sky outside the forest and lamented in frustration, "What could be more important than this? Even if the Divine Kingdom's Seven Laws were killed to a man, would it be more sorrowful than this?"

Chen Changsheng could imagine that everyone outside Hanqiu City would definitely think that he was already dead. This was because he did not leave through the gate of the Garden of Zhou, but was instead through some exceptionally mystical method directly transported tens of thousands of li away to the snowy plains. He could also imagine that there would be many different reactions to news of his death. Some would be ecstatic, others would feel like there was a weight off their minds, while there would also be some that would be overcome by grief and sadness.

The final group of people were all people that truly cared for him, like Luoluo, Tang Thirty-Six, Xuanyuan Po, Guardian Jin, and perhaps Mo Yu might also feel some regret. He even felt that Gou Hanshi and Guan Feibai, these disciples of the Mount Li Sword Sect, might be amongst this group. This was not even mentioning those elders in the Orthodoxy and that elf girl.

He did not want those people to feel sorrowful and anxious, so he was very worried. He was anxious to swiftly return to the human world so that he could relay the news of his survival as quickly as possible to the capital, letting everyone know that he was alive. Unfortunately, the snowy plain in the land of demons was much too far from the human world, and senior Su Li... was truly rather heavy.

Their escape through the snowy plains had truly gone rather smoothly.

A true expert in the path of the sword necessarily possessed a vast

wisdom and intelligence, no matter the aspect, like the culinary arts or the art of tea. This was because the myriad paths were all interconnected. Escape could also be called a retreat, which could be considered a part of the military arts, so Su Li was also very skilled at it.

The sword move which he had used to cleave at the sky had been very carefully chosen.

The blow had cut upon a sword path several hundred li long that pointed straight south, coinciding extremely well with the true meaning of the path of the sword: the straightest is the shortest, and the shortest is the fastest. Yet who could have thought that this strike's true ending point was actually southwest in some snowy ridge?

Black Robe had vaguely sensed this, but when the demon army finally adjusted its tactics and began to surround that ridge from the east and the west, the only things remaining by the edge of the hot spring were a few bloodstains and a jasmine flower.

At that point, Su Li was four hundred li away on a glacier.

Of course, he was on Chen Changsheng's back.

Chen Changsheng's body had been washed in dragon blood. It seemed to possess a boundless energy and a mighty strength, sufficient to display astonishing speeds. For him to run four hundred li in such a short time truly was rather astonishing. Even Su Li found himself somewhat amazed. It was just that in the face

of that wind and snow that cut at his face like a knife, it would often be the case that when he thought to give Chen Changsheng a few words of praise, only angry reprimands would leave his mouth.

He did not pause at the glacier. Following the cracks in the ice, Chen Changsheng continued to run southwards. He felt somewhat thirsty, so he thrust his hands into the cliff of ice by his side, scoring two clear marks through the light blue and beautiful ice and sending shards of ice flying. He stuffed a piece of ice into his mouth and felt that his body, boiling from his running, had somewhat cooled down and felt quite comfortable.

Running through glaciers and snowy plains, passing over snowy ridges and great mountains, Chen Changsheng continued to run with Su Li on his back. When he was thirsty, he would chew on some ice. When he was hungry, he would... endure. He went day and night without sleep, until one day, he finally saw the walls of a human town in the distance.

Just like this, he had crossed the ten thousand li of the snowy plains of the land of demons.

He could no longer hold on and instantly fell backwards.

# Chapter 359 - A Lion Keeping Watch On The Night And Its Attendant

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The moment Chen Changsheng awoke, he realized that he was lying on the snowy ground and the sky had almost turned dark. Dusky light spilled out from the west, illuminating the low walls of that distant town as well as the rag Su Li had wrapped around himself.

The rag had been found during their escape in an abandoned hunting lodge, its edges and corners in tatters. At this moment, it seemed to be on fire as it lit up in the twilight. Su Li sat cross-legged on the snow, his head lowered and covered by that rag, causing him to appear somewhat like Black Robe. Chen Changsheng asked, "I was lying on the snow, and yet... Senior does not care?"

After running incessantly, he had finally managed to cross the long ten thousand li of snowy plains, far away from the demon menace. One could imagine what sort of effort and price he had to pay and how exhausted he was. The moment he saw the human town, he immediately collapsed and was unable to rise. Yet, even in this sort of situation, Su Li did not come to his aid. This caused Chen Changsheng to feel somewhat uncomfortable.

Su Li's voice rang out from within the rag, carrying a sense of righteousness and self-confidence. "If I had the strength to move you, would I still need you to carry me around on your back and take me everywhere? In addition, when you fall over, would you mind paying attention to your position? Don't forget, I'm on your back. When you suddenly crash down like that, do you know how

miserable I was when being squashed by you?"

Chen Changsheng felt very helpless. During their escape, he would occasionally talk to this senior, so he had long confirmed that he who had never been skilled with his tongue could never obtain any advantage from conversation, even when reason was on his side. He propped up his aching body and slowly rose from the snowy ground. He walked over to Su Li and put him on his back, then once again began making his way into the distance.

By the time he reached the human town, the sky had already turned pitch-black. Fortunately, the wall blazed with countless torches, lighting up the ground before of the town. This was the only reason his utterly exhausted self avoided tripping on the protrusions of ice on the road.

This was an exceptionally crude, yet incredibly firm little town. To be more precise, this was the furthest military stronghold of the Great Zhou Army's Northwest division. There was no such thing as a curfew in this military stronghold, but if they wanted to enter the stronghold, they would have to undergo a very exhaustive process of inspection. It must be known that other than the most daring of adventurers, ordinary commoners would rarely appear in this place.

As they were being searched, Chen Changsheng was extremely worried that Su Li would get angry. The entire time, he kept anxiously looking over, but he didn't think that over the entire search, Su Li acted extremely obediently, just like a real disabled person.

The soldier in the stronghold began to ask his routine questions. Chen Changsheng had no customs document to take out, nor did he have any evidence of his journey. He was just about ready to admit his identity and have the military send someone to pick him up until he suddenly saw Su Li shaking his head in a mysterious manner. The eyes covered by the rag held a resolution that was difficult to oppose.

Su Li took out two custom documents from somewhere. They were two perfect, absolutely flawless custom documents. This perfection even included the shabbiness of the documents. In brief, there was nothing suspicious about it. The soldier's critical gaze took note of the pair as he listened to Su Li's answers. With a wave of his hand, he let the pair in, simultaneously reminding them to keep watch over their belongings.

The only establishment in which commoners could stay within this military stronghold was an inn, which, as expected, contained one large shared bed. However, tonight, there was only the two of them staying. The cold and stingy inn owner would naturally not heat the kang too warmly and did not even provide hot water. Thus, even after Chen Changsheng and Su Li and wrapped themselves up in the sour bedding for a long time, they still could not fall asleep.

Chen Changsheng opened his shining eyes and gazed up at the oil-stained ceiling as he thought of some trivial things. Like how this inn might have been constructed from a kitchen, or how that waiter being yelled at by the inn owner seemed very pathetic. Then he heard Su Li sigh, so he asked inquisitively, "Senior, you carry prepared identity documents and answered the questions exceptionally, so you should have a lot experience living outside.

Why is it that senior can't sleep?"

Everyone knew that Mount Li's Junior Martial Uncle Su Li most loved to travel the four seas, rarely returning to Mount Li. In terms of traveling experience, logically, there should be none that was more experienced than him.

Su Li said angrily, "What are you thinking? Who am I? How could I stay in such a run-down rotten place like this?"

Chen Changsheng thought to himself, previously if you had made your identity known, then we two definitely would not be sleeping on this cold kang. Don't even speak of this stronghold's commanding officer, even the generals of the south would have to immediately send somebody over. This idea, this question, which had always lingered in his mind, was finally voiced. "Senior, why is it that we can't reveal our identities?"

Su Li replied, "Do you know what I'm most famous for? Why the entire continent fears me?"

Chen Changsheng thought to himself, I grew up in the countryside in Xining village. Although I'm well-versed in the Daoist Canon, I know very little about worldly affairs. I only know that your cultivation is extremely high and your path of the sword is incredibly strong. Why is it not respect, but fear?

Su Li's voice seeped out of the icy bedding, causing them to seem even colder. "Although I've killed many demons, I've killed even more humans. Besides Zhou Dufu of the past, I don't think there's

anyone else that's slain more humans."

Chen Changsheng was speechless. Senior is narcissistically showing off again, he thought to himself. If it really was this way, wouldn't you be a butcher whose hands were drenched in blood. Why hasn't the Mount Li Sword Sect expelled you out of the sect yet?

As if he had sensed what he was thinking, Su Li's voice sounded out once more. "In Mount Li, my status is the highest, the strongest, therefore, I am also the eldest. The Discipline Hall and those guys on the mountain had long since ceased to see eye to eye with me, but what can they do to me?"

Chen Changsheng was speechless.

Su Li did not continue to expound upon his killing exploits. "I naturally have my reasons for killing humans. Pulling up by the roots, exterminating families; I would never use such crude and empty methods, which has brought me quite some trouble. Therefore, the more people I kill, the more enemies I have. At this point, even I can't remember clearly how many enemies I have."

Chen Changsheng's body became somewhat stiff. This can't be real, right? Then how you could survive until now?

"Very rarely will someone come find me seeking revenge, because I'm too strong. Of course, there are some guys who lose their heads in hatred and even forget about their own lives, their only thought is to kill me!"

As he talked about it, Su Li's mood clearly grew much worse. He angrily complained, "When I wake in the morning, they come to kill me. When I sleep, they also come to kill me. At every moment of the day, they want to kill me. Wave after wave after wave, and the thing I don't get is that even though these guys have such awful standards yet still can never kill me no matter what they try, they still continue to come. Don't they find it annoying? Even if they don't find it annoying, I'll find it annoying, ok?"

Chen Changsheng was even more speechless. To put life aside, those people who want to kill you must have a real blood feud with you. However, you would actually say that they've lost their heads in hate, and that they're just annoying?

Su Li continued, "This is why I rarely stay in Mount Li. Whenever I travel the continent, I've never used my true identity. If you don't want to be woken up on the toilet by some person with a magical artifact, I recommend that you do the same."

Chen Changsheng thought to himself, it should be right that tonight's situation is different from the normal routine.

The room settled into a long period of silence, then Su Li's voice resounded again. Except this time, his voice was no longer that proud or restless, but calm and serious.

"Those people who want me dead are just like a pack of dogs. They don't dare to take action against me, or even dare to bark at me from a distance. They only dare to conceal themselves in the

dark, waiting for me to tire, to grow old, or to become injured."

Chen Changsheng gazed at the ceiling, and it seemed as if he could see the grasslands during the night, a lion watching its surroundings, and countless enemies hidden in the gloom. If that lion were to grow old, its enemies would rush forward and rip it to pieces.

"I understand," he said.

Su Li replied, "As long as you understand."

In the morning, around five o'clock, Chen Changsheng opened his eyes and got out of bed. His complexion was somewhat pale and seemed rather haggard, but at least it was much better than when he was escaping through the snowy plains. It was just that his mind was even tenser than when he had been escaping.

Because of that conversation he had with Su Li the night before, he felt like this inn, and this entire stronghold, was filled with danger. At the dimly lit streets and the barely warm kitchen; the figure of a sword which brought death could appear at any moment.

For an expert at Su Li's level, his enemies or foes would also be extremely frightening. Chen Changsheng knew that he was not their opponent, so he could only hope to see through their concealment and make his preparations for battle beforehand. He also knew that he could possibly be too sensitive, but in matters of life and death, he had always felt that there was no such thing as

being too sensitive or cautious.

The porridge was watery and flavorless while the steamed buns were like rocks. As they sat by the table and ate breakfast, he silently kept careful watch over his surroundings. He was less like a tourist and more like a bodyguard. On the other hand, Su Li acted very naturally, as if he didn't care.

Chen Changsheng silently thought to himself, that cold and stingy inn owner was rather normal, but there are some problems with that waiter that was yelled at last night. In this place with such poor living conditions, how could there be such a warmhearted waiter? Last night when we checked in, that waiter even took the initiative to ask if we wanted some hot water, but in the end received an earful from the inn owner.

At this moment, that inn owner randomly began to harangue that waiter once again, all sorts of obscenities falling from his lips, and was very hard on the ear. Su Li continued to drink his porridge, from time to time raising his brows, as if this stream of abuse was a free appetizer.

After the scolding came the beating. The waiter seemed very obedient, not showing any defiance no matter how bad the beating or abuse. The waiter ran around, hands around the head, causing Chen Changsheng to grow even more vigilant.

The inn waiter finally ran to their table.

Without hesitation, Chen Changsheng pulled out his dagger.

The waiter had not seen the dagger, and almost seemed ready to run onto the dagger.

If he put away the dagger or inclined it, that waiter would take advantage and get closer.

Logically, if an inn guest were to see the waiter that was so attentive last night about to run against the sharp point of the sword, even it was only by instinct, they would shift the sword, give a little.

Chen Changsheng's breathing grew a little hurried, hesitating on his choice. Put away the sword?

If this was a real waiter, he would have just willfully slain an innocent.

If this was a fake waiter, he would be seeking his own death, and also burdening senior Su Li.

He did not know what he should do.

Thus, Su Li made the choice for him.

Su Li took up the chopsticks in his hand and poked at a certain place on Chen Changsheng's upper arm.

This thrust had no strength, and contained neither true essence nor sword intent.

Yet Chen Changsheng's dagger pierced forward as if it were a bolt of lightning.

The dagger did not pierce the waiter because it was slanted at the very beginning.

His dagger had pierced through the abdomen of the inn owner that had come in pursuit of the waiter.

Squelch.

The dagger pierced so deeply that the hilt could not be seen.

In this manner, the inn owner died.

# Chapter 360 - Full-Time Teaching (Part One)

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Fresh blood flowed along the dagger, but it was blocked by the hilt so it did not reach Chen Changsheng's hand. However, for some reason, he still seemed to be able to feel the warmth of the blood. He even felt that his hand was slightly sticky, making it very uncomfortable. Afterwards, when he thought about it, this seemed to be the first time he had killed someone. From Xining Village to the capital, participating in the Ivy Festival, the Grand Examination and then entering the Garden of Zhou, he fought many times, but other than the Demon General couple that died before the mausoleum, no one else had died under his dagger. In that sense, the owner of the inn was the first person he had killed.

The inn owner slowly fell down in front of him, his two round eyes full of unwillingness and despair. The mean look on his face had already long disappeared, and there was only the gaze of death.

Chen Changsheng stayed silent for a while, before withdrawing the dagger from his body. Afterwards, he stayed silent for another while and looked at Su Li. His gaze displayed his doubt—no matter how he looked at the owner, he did not seem like an assassin. On the other hand, the waiter was suspicious, so why did the senior want him to kill the owner?

Chen Changsheng was not like an enthusiastic and hot-blooded youth. Although he misunderstood that Su Li was indiscriminately slaughtering innocent people, he still tried his best to maintain calm. As he could not make the decision earlier, the fact that this itself was the best decision, Su Li was very satisfied. He said, "If you ask me why I killed him, it'll be very hard for me to explain

simply.”

Chen Changsheng said, “He had no murderous spirit, nor the signs of true essence that would indicate a cultivator.”

Su Li placed the bowl of porridge onto the table and used the chopsticks to point at the corpse of the inn owner in the puddle of blood. He said, “To open such a big inn in a military stronghold, how could the inn owner not have any murderous spirit at all?”

Chen Changsheng thought about it and understood what he implied. This was indeed suspicious.

Su Li continued, “Also, he was just too similar to a stereotypical big inn owner. Mean, easily angered... but actually, such an image is only an image that conforms to what the people think of a big inn owner. A real owner of an inn who has a shop in such a god-forsaken place can be cold, and will definitely be insensitive. So how can he be in the mood to go lecture a waiter of his inn?”

Chen Changsheng felt like he had just received a lecture himself, so he listened very seriously.

Su Li used the chopsticks to point at the owner’s dead body and continued, “Of course, these are only points of suspicion and not evidence. The evidence is that he didn’t have any signs of true essence, but he had Qi.”

Chen Changsheng lowered his head and rummaged through the

body of the owner for a while. He found a magical artifact in the shape of a jade pendant. The magical artifact could cover up the traces of true essence.

“I can’t teach you this. Wait till you reach a cultivation level like mine, and you can naturally feel Qi like that.” After saying that, Su Li picked up the bowl of porridge and continued with his unfinished breakfast. Looking at the changes in his eyebrows, it seemed as if he was very satisfied with the pickled vegetables that the inn provided.

“Originally, I thought it was the waiter because he was overenthusiastic with us last night. Also, his hand...” Chen Changsheng looked at the waiter in front of the table, and his gaze landed on the web between his index finger and thumb on his right hand. There was a very obvious callous, which may have been the sign of wielding a sword for a long time. The waiter’s complexion paled, and his entire body trembled, clearly frightened.

Su Li said casually while eating the porridge, “Other than holding a sword, the callous on the web of his hand may have been caused by a blade. A kitchen knife is also a blade.”

Although a kitchen knife and a sword were two completely different objects, the handle of a kitchen knife and the handle of a sword really did not have many differences. Chen Changsheng lowered his head and looked at the dagger that was dyed in blood. His breathing became rather rapid because he was suddenly very scared. If it were not for Su Li jabbing him with the chopsticks just then, perhaps he really would have stabbed the dagger into the waiter. That would mean he would have killed an innocent man.

If the wrong person was killed, what could be done? People only had one life, and killing the wrong person would forever remain as a mistake, never to be corrected. This was a truth that he found to be very hard to accept.

“Murder, murder!”

At this moment, the waiter seemed to have returned to his senses. He looked at the corpse of the owner in the puddle of blood and gave out a scream of extreme fear. He dashed towards the exit, but because of his fear and how frantic he was, he tripped over the dead body of the owner and landed heavily on the ground. He ignored the pain and attempted to stand up frantically, but instead he slipped on the sticky blood. He seemed to be in an extremely sorry shape.

Chen Changsheng felt rather sorry for him and was about to go up and help him up off the ground. Right at that moment, Su Li finally finished his breakfast. He wiped his mouth with satisfaction and put the empty bowl on the table again. Afterwards, he threw away the chopsticks in his hand. He seemed very unrestrained and exceedingly like a hedonistic son of a wealthy family. It was just that although his chopsticks seemed to be casually thrown, they perfectly hit an area on Chen Changsheng’s neck.

A very weak but very clever power entered Chen Changsheng’s body. It controlled his actions, making him turn slightly. At the same time, his right hand extended out like lightning.

The dagger that was covered in blood was still in his right hand.

With a squelch, the sharp dagger pierced through A seemingly tough soft armor without any resistance and deeply stabbed into the chest of the waiter. It directly punctured his heart.

The face of the waiter was full of shock and ‘ah ah’ sounds were produced by his throat. Fresh blood flowed out from the corner of his lips, and he slowly fell forwards, dead.

This time, Chen Changsheng really did become blank-minded, and his complexion immediately paled.

At that moment, the dagger, which was still held in his hand, was still deeply embedded into the chest of the waiter. He seemed to be able to feel the entire process of the heart slowing down until it stopped through the edge of the dagger.

He glanced at Su Li rather uneasily. If Su Li could not provide enough evidence this time, at least, greater evidence than he had given for the owner, it would be very hard for him to accept everything. Since he needed powerful evidence, he searched for it himself. He used his trembling hands to search the corpse, and when he saw a small crossbow that obviously contained a great poison in his hand, he finally relaxed a little.

“Senior, you... just how did you tell this time?”

The gaze he used to look at Su Li was no longer uneasy, but

instead full of admiration.

Su Li said, “Didn’t you hear what the owner was always yelling at the waiter for?”

At that time, Chen Changsheng’s attention was entirely focused on the movements of the owner and waiter and he did not pay attention to what they were talking about.

“The owner yelled at him very brilliantly, and their conversation was full of content. I am talking about the exact details, such as the waiter being lazy... what does this prove? It proves that he really knows him.” Su Li stood up and he said as he looked at the two dead bodies, “Perhaps they are friends who grew up together? Who knows? In any case, I know that the companion of an assassin is definitely also an assassin.”

Chen Changsheng felt feelings of admiration well up again and thought that it was indeed the small details that determined success or failure. It was just that these were still partial guesses... what if he killed wrongly?

“Killing wrongly? Then that’s just a mistake, what else can you do?”

Su Li said expressionlessly and then spread his arms. He said, “What are you waiting for? Hurry up and come over.”

Chen Changsheng returned to his senses and asked, “We are just

leaving like this?”

Su Li said in a bad mood, “Perhaps you feel the need to wait for the soldiers of the stronghold to come?”

Chen Changsheng did not dare to say anymore. Taking advantage of the time before the murder in the inn disturbed the people in the stronghold, he carried Su Li and left in the snow and wind, traveling south.

In a dark willow forest southeast of the military stronghold, the two stopped and rested for a while.

Chen Changsheng was actually very confused. Since the people who wanted to kill Su Li already knew his tracks, why did the two of them still have to conceal their identity and not directly contact the Northern Great Zhou Army to gain protection?

Su Li said, “Those two guys were only assassins who did not make the cut. They probably don’t even know who I am, and just happen to be active in this region.”

Chen Changsheng asked, “Who are those two assassins?”

Su Li really was a little annoyed and said, “I already said that they’re people who didn’t make the cut, so how would I know who they are?”

Chen Changsheng thought about it and said, “You mean that the

two assassins from before only knew how to kill and steal, but if your identity was found out, those that come will not be so weak, but rather be true experts?”

Su Li said, “It’s a very simple concept, do you still need me to explain it in detail? Why is such a small guy like you such a chatterer?”

Chen Changsheng thought that although he could not be considered as habitually silent, he was not very talkative normally. It was only because the senior did things so mysteriously, so he always felt as if he did not understand all of it, he was rather uncertain.

He persevered, “Since it’s like that, then why don’t the demons just reveal your tracks?”

Su Li said, “Because Black Robe is also uncertain of my location. All the people he has connections to in the human world, or in other words, the people that he has a mutual understanding of, are currently only running all over the place, looking for me. Of course, even if those people confirm my location, they won’t release this information.”

Chen Changsheng asked with confusion, “Why’s that?”

Su Li said, “Because other than the many people that want to kill me, there are also many people that want to help me.”

Chen Changsheng did not understand. Did it mean that if this senior's location was known by the entire world, many people would rush over from thousands of li away to come help him?

"Who am I?" Su Li looked at him and asked seriously.

At this moment, Chen Changsheng had already gotten used to how to answer questions like this. He was rather sick of it, but also rather numb to it. He answered like a machine, "Mount Li Junior Martial Uncle, expert of the path of the sword, the idol of the younger generation of cultivators."

Compared to the Black Dragon, Su Li obviously only cared about appearances and did not criticize his response for being unmindful. He said proudly, "Isn't this enough? Since I am the idol of many people, if they know I am injured and I have difficulties, won't those people hurry to save me?"

Chen Changsheng did not want to continue this topic. He asked, "Senior, what do we do next?"

Su Li said, "Obviously have you secretly deliver me back to Mount Li under the gazes of everyone in the world."

Chen Changsheng thought that Mount Li was in the south of the continent, and was over several tens of thousands of li away. Just how difficult was delivering him back to Mount Li, and to make it so that no one knew... also, just how worried would the people who cared for him become?

“Senior, why not let people from Mount Li come and pick you up?”

“Idiot, Mount Li is the furthest from here. If I wait for the disciples and grand-disciples to come, it’ll be too late.”

Chen Changsheng thought that the closest was the Northern Great Zhou Army, but Su Li just happened to not want to go look for them. He could not help but speak seriously, “Senior, I don’t understand why you don’t want to ask the Northern Great Zhou Army for help. If it is because of dignity, I can go ask for the help. They will definitely send people to send us back to the capital.”

Su Li looked at him and sneered, “Your position as the principal of the Orthodox Academy is really that outstanding?”

Chen Changsheng replied that although his own identity of the principal of the Orthodox Academy did not mean anything in front of the senior, it still had some importance to the Great Zhou.

Su Li said, “However, have you ever thought about how if everyone’s eyes are on you, how am I supposed to conceal my identity?”

Chen Changsheng looked at him and said earnestly, “Since the people who want to kill you have already appeared, your identity and location will definitely be exposed. What we should strive for is time. Mount Li is indeed too far away, and so is the capital. However, the Great Zhou Army really is very close. As long as you reveal your identity, why should you be worried anymore?”

After saying everything, they returned to his opinion from the very beginning. It was also the matter he did not understand the most.

Su Li looked at him and sighed, “I really don’t know if you’re naive or just an idiot.”

Chen Changsheng stared blankly. He did not know what he meant.

Su Li looked at him and said in a manner that was like a smile, yet not like a smile, “You are always saying that I should ask the Great Zhou Army for help. Perhaps you’ve never thought... the people that want me to die the most in this continent are you Zhou people?

As he finished speaking, the snow on the black willow tree suddenly fell with a rustle.

The world was cold.

The ground trembled slightly, and several hundreds of iron cavalry raced across the snowy plains.

Those were the most elite Snow Cavalry of the Northern Great Zhou Army. They seemed to be currently looking for something or someone.

# Chapter 361 - Full-Time Teaching (Part Two)

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Chen Changsheng's gaze passed through the black willow forest and rested on the armored horsemen on the snowy plains, and only then did he understand Su Li's words. Besides the demons, the people that wanted Su Li dead the most were the people of Zhou. The Great Zhou cavalrymen that were obviously searching for their target served as evidence, but he still felt like there was another possibility. Perhaps they were here to rescue the two of them?

"Why do you always like to think about things so pessimistically?" Chen Changsheng asked. At his question, a tinge of ridicule could be heard in Su Li's reply. "Because things will often develop in the most pessimistic fashion."

As if to prove his words, a group of several dozen horsemen split off from the several hundred. They began to gallop towards the black willow forest, scrawling a black line on the monotonous snow. When the horsemen arrived in front of the forest, the cavalrymen began to remove their weapons from their saddles and let down the visors on their helmet, seeming exceptionally wary—no matter how one looked at it, it did not seem like these cavalrymen had come to rescue people, but to kill.

The cavalrymen entered the forest, accompanied by the dense sound of hoofs smacking the ground. Occasionally, there would be a snap as a black willow branch was broken. Whether it was for the purpose of rescuing or killing, they had no need to hide their tracks. Moreover, if the object of their search was as described in their intelligence reports, then he was just a cripple. The following affair should be very simple indeed.

At some point, Chen Changsheng's right hand had already begun to rest on the hilt of his dagger, ready to pull it out at any time.

His body truly was incredibly strong. Even after crossing ten thousand li of snowy plains, with all his weariness and hidden injuries, they had vanished without a trace with that one night's sleep on the cold kang. His true essence was gradually recovering, and even the injuries he had suffered in the Garden of Zhou had improved greatly. He was confident that he could completely wipe out every one of the several dozen cavalrymen that had entered the forest, even if they were elites that had all succeeded in Purification. However, he had no confidence that he could kill them all noiselessly or without attracting the attention of the large force of cavalry which was currently making its way to the east side of the forest. Crucially, the cavalrymen were all part of the Great Zhou army, and he was a person of Zhou. He truly could not just suddenly start killing without asking for a reason first.

He did not know what to do, so he only stared at the faint figures of the cavalry in the forest. As they got closer, his breathing grew more hurried and tense. The fingers of the hand holding his dagger were getting whiter and whiter. If he allowed the situation to continue in this manner, it would not be long before those horsemen saw him and Su Li.

"Senior, we should go."

He finally made his decision. He turned around to indicate that Su Li should lean on, as he prepared to carry Su Li to escape.

Since he could not continue to hide, nor could he take out his dagger and kill, the only option left was to run. It was a good thing that he now possessed an unimaginable speed. He believed that not even the horsemen would be able to catch up to them in such a short amount of time. As for the troubles that would be brought when the Zhou army caught on to their tracks, he currently did not have the luxury of considering it.

Su Li had no intention of leaving. "Open the umbrella."

Chen Changsheng did not understand. Taking the umbrella and opening it, he followed Su Li's instructions and poured his true essence into it, simultaneously activating some mechanism in the umbrella's shaft. A faintly discernible Qi began to descend from the edge of the umbrella, just like an invisible and immaterial waterfall, completely surrounding them. The cold wind could no longer blow the Yellow Paper Umbrella around, but snow began to fall from the sky, a little of which landed upon the canvas of the umbrella soundlessly.

The several dozen cavalrymen had finally reached the depths of the black willow forest and had reached a place that was not very far from their current location.

Chen Changsheng was very tense as he looked at those horsemen that were only a bit more than ten zhang away. He felt like he could even clearly make out the eye color of their commanding officer.

Yet the several dozen cavalrymen seemed to have seen nothing at all and scattered to search the rest of the forest.

After some time, Chen Changsheng finally confirmed that the cavalry had left the forest and abruptly relaxed. He suddenly realized that the two hands that had held the umbrella had grown stiff from nerves.

"Put away the umbrella," Su Li said.

He complied and put away the umbrella, tying it to his waist and preparing to leave.

"Don't be too rushed. Those horsemen should still be waiting on the perimeter of the forest," Su Li said again.

Chen Changsheng did not question it and sat back down by the tree. Then he looked at the Yellow Paper Umbrella and sighed regretfully, "I really didn't think that this umbrella would have such a wonderful use!"

The edge of Su Li's lips perked up. "You also didn't think about who I was."

Chen Changsheng did not continue the conversation. He truly was rather fed up with it, and he knew that even if he did not answer, this egotistic senior would certainly have a way of continuing the conversation himself.

As expected, Su Li's two brows slightly rose up as if they wanted to fly away, and he proudly boasted, "This is a magical artifact I

designed together with old man Tang. With the Heaven Shrouding Sword that formed the pivot and the countless precious materials that formed the body, not even a Meditation Cultivator was guaranteed to see through the illusion. How could ordinary cavalrymen like these see through my umbrella?"

Chen Changsheng wanted to say something but stopped himself.

Su Li's brows flew up even higher. "If you have something to say, say it."

Chen Changsheng replied, "Senior, this umbrella... is mine."

The black willow forest was very quiet and the snow fell without a sound.

At the start when they were leaving the hot spring in the snowy ridge, they had gotten into an argument over this matter. Chen Changsheng felt that Su Li's injuries were too heavy and so did not continue the argument. But now, he could no longer hold it back, because he felt that this umbrella was his.

Su Li coldly laughed. "You know about the origins of this umbrella?"

Chen Changsheng had heard Zhexiu speak about some of the stories related to this umbrella. Coupled with what he had seen and heard in the Garden of Zhou and the snow plains, he basically knew everything, so he nodded his head.

Su Li paid no attention to him and narrated the story of the umbrella one more time. At the very end, he stared into Chen Changsheng's eyes and declared, "I found the sword, and I designed that umbrella. You actually have the audacity to say that this umbrella is yours?"

Chen Changsheng answered, "But this umbrella's materials were all found by the Old Master Tang. Back then when Senior left this umbrella behind at the Wenshui Tangs, wasn't it because Senior could not find the money?"

Su Li's expression gradually grew frigid. "Repeat what you said."

Chen Changsheng felt that not being able to find the money was truly rather imprecise, so he changed his phrasing. "Isn't it because Senior repudiated the debt that this Yellow Paper Umbrella returned to the Wenshui Tang clan?"

Su Li furiously laughed. "As Mount Li's supreme elder, I have wandered the four seas, plundered houses, and committed every sort of crime—how could I lack money?"

Chen Changsheng completely ignored his talk about robbing houses and committing crimes and earnestly explained, "But Senior still didn't pay."

Su Li found he had nothing he could say, so he said nothing.

The atmosphere grew rather awkward. Chen Changsheng hesitantly got up and climbed up a tree to observe the distant movements of the Great Zhou cavalry, at the same time letting the cold wind disperse the heat on his face.

After a while, he descended from the tree and said to Su Li, "Senior, I believe that those horsemen have really withdrawn."

Su Li ignored him.

Chen Changsheng continued, "Senior, if the cavalrymen really are searching for you, do we still need to hide our tracks? Senior does not believe in us Zhou people, but there should still be people that Senior trusts. Just like Senior said before, although there will be people that come to kill Senior there are also people that would come to save Senior. Although Mount Li is far away, those people that want to save Senior could be very close by!"

Su Li looked into his eyes and said, "Herein lies the question, are there more people that want to kill me, or more people that want to save me? Who are the more urgent ones?"

Chen Changsheng somewhat hesitantly replied, "Senior... don't you think too darkly of human nature?"

"It's not about nature, but hearts. Human nature cannot be tested, and human hearts cannot be guessed. Zealous love and rejection are both ultimately about profit. Emperor Taizong is clearly a shameless follower who murdered his brothers and compelled his father. Zhou Dufu is clearly a butcher who

slaughtered people without regard. Yet why is that in the eyes of ordinary folk, these two seem to have a golden aura about their bodies? Because Emperor Taizong and Zhou Dufu brought them sufficient profits. They expelled the demons back to Xuelao City and spared the humans living in the Central Plains from the blade of the soldiers and the flames of war, spared them from being enslaved by another race. Thus they naturally became what the hearts of the people longed for."

Su Li seriously asked him, "And me? I live in this conflict-free and peaceful generation. Besides killing a few Demon Generals, I've not done too much. What have I done for the human world? What sort of profits have I obtained for the cultivators and the common folk? Enough so that they would lightly journey ten thousand li to help me? Just because my path of the sword is powerful without equal, that my bearing is exceptionally free and easy-going?"

It was clearly a very serious, even solemn discussion, or perhaps a lecture, but because of how those last few words changed the flavor, Chen Changsheng had no idea how to continue, so he asked, "What about the southerners?"

In the minds of the common people, Mount Li's Junior Martial Uncle Su Li was currently the strongest expert of the south. It was also because of his existence that the south could protect its final vestiges of dignity and pride in the face of the flourishing Great Zhou.

"Of course, there are many southerners who have thanked me, but there are also many southerners that loathe me. As I've said

these past few days, I've killed many people. Since I grew up in the south, the vast majority of people I killed naturally are southerners. They all had relatives, fellow students and disciples, and later generations. How could all those people like me? Of course, even if these people who loathed me were even more numerous, they wouldn't be in the majority, or else wouldn't I be a rat crossing the street that everyone is shouting out to kill? The problem lies in the fact that many years ago, I did something that made the entire south despair, so the people that dislike me grew in number."

"What thing?" Chen Changsheng asked curiously.

"A bit more than ten years ago, the bloody case of the Orthodox Academy. You should know about it."

"I know about it."

"Speaking of which, is Daoist Ji really your master?"

"Senior... in truth, I'm really not really clear on this matter."

"Fine, let's go back to the main topic. In brief, after that incident in the Orthodox Academy, the Pope was severely wounded, the army was in internal disorder and the Imperial Court at odds with itself. Zhou Tong was randomly killing people, and the entire capital was in complete chaos. Your Zhou Dynasty was in complete shambles. In the eyes of the southerners, this was undoubtedly their best opportunity. Moreover, it must be admitted that the Longevity Sect was truly very powerful back then, on par with

your Li Palace."

"And then?"

"Just as the southerners had completed their several years of preparation and were ready to sortie, because of a certain matter, I trampled into the Longevity Sect and slaughtered all those elders. As a result, the things they had prepared to do were naturally left unsettled."

"Senior, this sort of secret is really too shocking, or else why would I always feel like Senior is making up ways to praise yourself?"

"Such a tragic affair, what's there to praise about it?"

In a rare moment, Su Li did not continue the conversation to praise himself. His expression was so calm that it caused the heart to beat faster.

# Chapter 362 - Full-Time Teaching (Part Three)

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Su Li said expressionlessly, “The best and final opportunity of the southerners was lost just like this. Will they thank me? Other than believing that I am a madman, the people of Zhou won’t thank me either.”

Chen Changsheng thought about it and then said, “...dislike, being unthankful—this does not mean that they want Senior to die.”

Su Li said, “In a blink of an eye, over ten years have passed. Tianhai, old man Yin and that lady on the Holy Maiden Peak still wholeheartedly want the north and south to unite. But I won’t allow it. If I won’t allow it, then Mount Li will not allow it, then the Longevity Sect won’t allow it. The unification of the north and south... will forever be an idea on paper. Are you saying that perhaps these Saints don’t want me to die?”

Listening to what Su Li had said, Chen Changsheng did not say anything for a long time. He thought about the great situation that the demons had set up on the snowy plains the moment he had left the Garden of Zhou and said, “The demons... also really want Senior to die.”

“Don’t you feel that this is very absurd? Remember, the enemies of your enemies are not necessarily your friends, because there is something called profit in between. If I die, the continent will fall into unrest, and the Demon Lord and Tianhai are the two most confident people in the world. They are confident that they can use

the unrest and gain what they want from it, so they obviously really want me to die.”

Chen Changsheng looked at Su Li and asked very seriously and sincerely, “Senior, why don’t you support the unification of the north and south? No matter how you look at it, it is beneficial for the Human race.”

“Just because it’s beneficial for the Human race, I have to support it? Okay, what I said sounds too villainous, I take it back.”

Su Li looked at him calmly. “But can you answer my question? What difference is there from being unified by Tianhai or the demons?”

Chen Changsheng really wanted to say that the difference was very big, as the war between different races could easily bring the danger of extinction. The battle between the humans was just a problem of who was willing to lower their heads. However, he knew that to people like Su Li, being governed by someone was a situation he could not accept, so there was indeed no great difference between the two.

“Senior, has the world in your eyes always been so dark?”

“Not dark, just colorless, frigid like ice. As I have said, that is profit.”

“Perhaps... you are just unable to think of the world

optimistically?” This was already Chen Changsheng’s third question of a similar nature.

“I can’t because matters like this have already occurred many times in the past. The so-called history is just evidence of the moment, and the so-called present is just the repetition of history.” Su Li looked at him and said, “I don’t want to become a second Zhou Dufu, so no matter if it is the demons or you Zhou people, I won’t believe any of you.”

It became silent in the black willow forest again. Chen Changsheng stayed silent for a very long time before suddenly opening his mouth, “Senior, are you teaching me?”

Ever since they had left the military stronghold, the quantity of conversations between Su Li and him increased. Afterwards, no matter if it was the pursuit of assassins, meeting the cavalry of the Great Zhou or the seeming casualness within the conversations, there were actually extremely deep choices of topics, all indicating that he attempted to teach Chen Changsheng some things—it should have been how to view the world and how to survive.

Su Li looked at him and laughed at him slightly, “Isn’t it be a little too late for you to realize it now? In the rumors, they say that you know the Daoist Canon thoroughly, but why do I currently feel that you don’t have any perception at all?”

“But... why?”

Chen Changsheng did not mind the Senior’s mockery and only

felt confused. He was a citizen of Zhou and Su Li was a southerner. He was a part of the new generation of people being raised and groomed by the Orthodoxy, while Su Li was a senior and an important existence that cultivated the path of the sword. Originally, the two did not have any connections, and belonged to different factions, or were even secret enemies. Not to mention the terrible relationship between the Orthodox Academy and the Mount Li Sword Sect, it was likely that competition would occur between him and Qiushan Jun in the future. Su Li had no reason to instruct him like a teacher.

“Because I admire you very much.” Su Li looked at him and said expressionlessly, “Is this reason, not enough?”

Chen Changsheng shook his head very sincerely and said, “Senior, it obviously isn't enough.”

Su Li was slightly at a loss for words. If this was any other junior, to be taught so patiently, perhaps they may not have cried out of gratitude, but at least after he had provided a reason, they would definitely not continue asking. He looked at the clear, bright eyes of the youth and suddenly smiled. He thought that it was indeed right; if this little guy was not such a person, how could he act as he wanted?

“Because I wish that you can survive well, and the longer you live, the better it is,” he said seriously to Chen Changsheng.

Chen Changsheng was slightly surprised. He thought that perhaps the senior knew about the matter of his broken meridians and knew his days were numbered?

What Su Li followed up with showed that he did not know the secret. He said, “Because only by living long enough can you become strong enough. I wish for you to always be strong, all the way until the end.”

“What is the end?”

“The next Pope.”

“...Senior wishes for me to become the next Pope?”

“Correct, because if you become the Pope, it is the best to the southerners.”

“Why?”

“Because you are unwilling to kill, you are and even more unlikely to become intoxicated by killing. You view the other matters outside of life and death very clearly. I have never seen such a person at your age who does not care for his name so much... of course, your obsessiveness over my Yellow Paper Umbrella sometimes makes me begin to doubt my judgment.”

“I don’t know why Senior thinks that I don’t care about my name... it’s just that I can become the Pope with just this?”

Chen Changsheng subconsciously looked at the graying sky. He

looked at the snowflakes that landed in a place that was an unknown distance away and said, “I feel it’s so far away.”

Su Li looked at him with slight interest and said, “Have you perhaps never had such a realization?”

Chen Changsheng retracted his gaze and asked slightly blankly, “What realization?”

“The Li Palace views you with so much importance and puts so much into raising you so that you are the youngest to reach the upper level of the Ethereal Opening realm and the youngest principal of the Orthodox Academy... if it were not for raising you to be the next pope, what are those old guys doing?”

Chen Changsheng said nothing. He currently already knew why Archbishop Mei Lisha cared for him so much, but what was the Pope thinking?

After leaving the Mausoleum of Books, all of the mysteries had already received answers. However, he was always very confused by this matter and subconsciously did not want to remember it. Too many things had happened in the Garden of Zhou to the point that he had really forgotten about it until he was reminded by Su Li again right now.

He was the successor of the Orthodoxy.

Only, his eyes still rested on at a location not far in front of him

habitually, and he was not used to raising his head to look at the sky. No matter if it was the grayish sky or the brilliant blue sky, the rays of light were all so dazzling. If he returned to the capital and became the successor of the Orthodoxy, perhaps he would have to directly confront the awe of the Empress. This made him very uneasy. Of course, he needed to return to the capital first.

# Chapter 363 - Full-Time Teaching (Part Four)

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"When I mentioned Daoist Ji last time, you said that you didn't know anything...were you deceiving me?" Su Li said as he looked at the expression on Chen Changsheng's face.

Chen Changsheng could only maintain his silence, given how he was not too skilled at making up lies.

Su Li continued to talk to himself. "Then just what are those old guys planning to do by pushing you out?"

These dialogues frequently occurred, and their conclusion often did not require an answer. Chen Changsheng could not find an answer, and Su Li only used up a short amount of time to think about it.

Confirming that the cavalry of the Great Zhou were truly far away, Chen Changsheng put Su Li on his back and passed through the black willow forest, continuing south.

As he walked, or perhaps ran, the climate began to gradually grow warmer, and the scenery that the two of them saw gradually began to draw closer to the true season. In the capital, it was most likely the peak of spring, while in Mount Li in the south, it was already late spring. However, it was still somewhat chilly here, and their eyes could still spy remnants of snow like little stars. Fortunately, there were also little patchy stars of green.

Seeing those grasses that had died in the previous year budding forth with green sprouts, Chen Changsheng recalled that it had already been one whole year since he had left Xining village. Far too many changes had occurred within this year. Even if he was just a youth in the midst of his spring, from time to time, he would turn back, and he would inevitably sigh with a regret more appropriate for a middle-aged man.

After they passed by a farmer village called Woli village, their situation changed somewhat. They now had a carriage, being pulled along by two hale and hearty furry deer.

Chen Changsheng sat at the front of the carriage, pulling on the ropes that had been tied around the necks of the deer. Every now and then, he would make a few incomprehensible noises, perhaps wanting to imitate the methods of the farmers. Yet it was very obvious that those two furry deer had no idea what he was saying. Thankfully, the general direction was correct, always heading south. The south was still very far away, but as long as they kept persisting forward, they would continue to get closer.

Su Li was lying down in the carriage, a thick blanket cushioning him from below while his body was covered by a thick but smooth animal hide. The Yellow Paper Umbrella was set down at his side, as well as food and drink. He held a bamboo flute against his lips, from time to time blowing a clear and elegant sound. He seemed contented to the extreme, with none of that miserable feeling of a heavily-injured person attempting to escape.

After proceeding for two more days, they could faintly make out

an earth-colored city on the official road. Unlike that military stronghold they saw at the beginning, this was an actual city. Based on the size and perimeter of the city, it seemed like it could hold tens of thousands of people. Presumably, it was very bustling and lively within. If one wanted to reconnect with the human world, this was without question the most convenient place to do it.

Chen Changsheng turned his head and shot a glance at Su Li, using his eyes to ask whether he wanted to enter the city.

Su Li was just then using a piece of fur to carefully clean the holes of his bamboo flute, not paying any attention.

Chen Changsheng understood, but still did not quite understand. Shaking his head, he grasped the reins and had those two deer carry the carriage down the official road, passing by the slightly hard fields and bypassing that earth-colored city.

South of the city was a forest of birch trees. The several thousand birch trees were not at all thick. They seemed slender and straight, like swords growing up from the ground and piercing into the sky.

It was deep spring, but these birches in the cold ground had still not put forth any green leaves. The eyes did not encounter any sort of hindrance, letting one see the trees several li away.

‘When encountering a forest, don’t enter.’ This was not something Su Li had taught Chen Changsheng from his experience traveling the world, but some old saying he had seen written many

times in those miscellaneous essays.

Chen Changsheng lightly pulled on the reins, indicating that the two deer should stop.

He did not sense the slightest danger, only acted subconsciously.

With difficulty, Su Li sat his body up in the carriage. At some point, the bamboo flute had been stuck in his waist and been replaced by the Yellow Paper Umbrella.

He looked at the calm birch forest, then suddenly said, "They've come."

Who came? It was naturally his enemies. The people that wanted to kill Su Li had come.

Chen Changsheng's mood instantly became tenser. He leaped down from the carriage to the ground, using his fastest speed to untie the ropes around the necks of the deer. Then he used the sheath of his dagger to give them two strikes on their thick behinds. In pain, the furry deer ran off in the opposite direction of the birch forest. It was just that this sort of docile livestock actually did not run very far. They stood several dozen zhang away, looking at Chen Changsheng with expressions of bewilderment, as if they didn't understand why he had struck them.

"You care about their lives, but what about me?" Su Li said to

Chen Changsheng angrily.

Chen Changsheng grasped the sheath of his dagger and asked, "Then does Senior want to go in or not?"

When they had just left the hot spring in the snowy ridge, he had asked Su Li this question. Back then, Su Li had not been willing, and it seemed like he had still not changed his mind. He only heard Su Li sneer, "If I go in, what will I do if you die? I have no desire to place all my hopes on another, let alone such a weak guy like you."

In his heart, Chen Changsheng truly felt that this was very reasonable. Although Senior could not fight, his battling experience and knowledge far surpassed his own by many times. Senior being at his side would always be some assistance to him. There was no activity from the quiet birch forest. He somewhat uneasily asked, "What should we do next? Should I be rushing into the forest?"

Su Li had no idea what he was talking about and asked, "And what will you do once you've rushed into the forest?"

Chen Changsheng replied, "Yesterday Senior said that the most important moment in battle was the instant in which one turned from defense to offense. If one could truly be caught off guard, then even the strongest opponent could lose."

Su Li stared at him and asked, "So you are prepared to rush into the forest, find that person, and then kill him?"

Chen Changsheng very earnestly nodded his head.

Su Li put his hands on his forehead and asked, "Do you know what level of cultivation that assassin in the forest is?"

Chen Changsheng very earnestly shook his head.

Su Li furiously bellowed, "And so just how are you prepared to charge in? Do you plan to throw away your life?"

Chen Changsheng was at a loss, not knowing whether he should nod his head or shake it. After thinking it over, he asked, "Is this... not according to Senior's teaching?"

Su Li dispelled his anger and helplessly said, "You must first understand that for those things I mentioned, you first have to establish that you and your opponent are on similar levels. Even if you're lacking, you can't be too lacking."

Chen Changsheng replied, "But Senior's original words were clear... even the strongest opponent could lose."

Su Li retorted angrily, "Rhetoric, this is rhetoric! Do you not understand that rhetoric and exaggeration are a part of the art of speaking!?"

Chen Changsheng lowered his head in silence. After a while, he could not help but raise his head back up and ask, "Then what do I do if I really do encounter an opponent that is much stronger than

me?"

The answer Su Li gave was exceptionally concise and plain, straightforward and clear. "Flee, or kneel."

Flee? The speed at which Chen Changsheng could run with Su Li on his back was not necessarily faster than the speed of that assassin in the forest who had still not appeared. It must be known that the people who chose to take the profession of assassin would always possess body movements and speed faster than the average cultivator. Kneel? Chen Changsheng was like Su Li. Neither of them would place their lives completely in the hands of another, even if it was someone they trusted, let alone someone that had come to kill them.

Not being able to flee and not being able to kneel, in truth there remained still one other option: waiting.

Chen Changsheng took out his dagger and stared at the still and noiseless birch forest, gazed at the green buds which from a distance were gradually about to densely grow but from close-by were very difficult to see, waiting for that person to appear.

From start to end, the person never appeared.

Time slowly passed, and even the hand holding the dagger began to ache. He shouted out into the forest. "Come out already! He's already seen you."

Su Li had no idea he would do such a thing. He shook his head at the sky, giving off the feeling that he was ashamed to be associated with him.

There was still no response from that person in the forest. Chen Changsheng whispered, "Senior, it seems this method of enticing the enemy also doesn't work."

That previous dialogue, even quarrel, he had with Su Li was naturally not a real quarrel.

Gazing at the quiet birch forest, Su Li thoughtfully declared, "The person has left."

"Eh?" Chen Changsheng was rather surprised.

Su Li once again lay down in the carriage, putting down the Yellow Paper Umbrella and taking up the bamboo flute.

The two deer, at Chen Changsheng's call, slowly walked back, then stood docilely as the ropes were tied back around their necks.

The clear sound of the bamboo flute once more sounded out.

In the ensuing journey, Chen Changsheng grew much quieter, or perhaps it was better to say that he was much more like his usual self—only when he was with Tang Thirty-Six and Su Li would he become more talkative.

His current silence was of course because of that assassin that could appear at any time.

Just as not speaking would sometimes be more powerful than speaking, an enemy that did not appear was always more frightening than one right in front of you.

Contrarily, Su Li acted as he normally would, and no trace of unease could be found on his body. He continued to blow on his bamboo flute, drink from his small wine bottle, and take care of his injuries. He was just like that day when he was lying in the hot spring, very content and serene. It was like he wasn't injured at all, just traveling on a normal trip.

Chen Changsheng's vigilant and focused sight encapsulated all things. There was a massive pressure on his mind, and when he thought about some things, his mood grew increasingly heavy.

In the military stronghold, they had encountered two assassins, and then the cavalry of the Great Zhou had been hunting all around for them. Perhaps it was just as Su Li had surmised, that Black Robe had calculated the direction of their escape and then spread this news to some powers in the human world. How would those powers act from now on? If it was the Divine Empress prompting this pursuit of Su Li, did she know that he and Su Li were together? If she did know, would she have those experts and assassins also kill him at the same time? If it was... the powerful figures within the Li Palace that wanted Su Li dead, could they possibly know that he was still alive? Or perhaps the demons had purposefully concealed his existence?

On a certain day at dusk, in a place eight hundred li from Tianliang County, the deer carriage stopped to rest for a while, the twilight rich as blood.

Chen Changsheng took all his unease and poured it out to Su Li. Right now, regardless of what disputes remained between them, since he had not abandoned Su Li back in the snowy mountain ridge, he would not abandon Su Li midway. At present, they were sitting on the same carriage, so they would naturally have to confront the coming violent storms and massive waves together.

"There shouldn't be many people that know of my being heavily injured, the reason for which I already told you a few days ago. We already analyzed that assassination in the military stronghold... if that clumsy and ridiculous action could be considered an assassination. Together with those several hundred Zhou cavalrymen, we can clearly see that neither those guys who want to kill me nor I, being hunted by those guys, want the entire continent to know."

Su Li took up a tree branch and began to draw out a map on the ground. Pointing at a straight line, he said, "They have no need to besiege a stronghold so that they can strike at reinforcements, so the reason we have seen no activity can only be that our speed is too fast. After we broke through the line of the northern army, the people did not have enough time to muster up enough strong people to come kill us. If we were to view this as a war, then their main force would just be rushing over..."

Chen Changsheng squatted on the side, listening closely.

Over the past few days, this sort of scene had occurred many times. Su Li would normally put forward a very indecent appearance, but on these occasions, he would always be exceptionally serious. He taught Chen Changsheng how to distinguish between the tracks of humans and beasts, how to tell which plants were edible, which mushrooms were poisonous, what was the most important part of battles, and even tactics and marching.

Besides swords and cultivation, he taught Chen Changsheng many things.

Chen Changsheng once again asked, "Senior, why are you teaching me these things?"

Choosing a future Pope for the southerners? This might have been the real answer, but it was not enough.

"Because, I taught Qiushan before."

Su Li tossed aside the tree branch and said, "He studied from me for one month. If there's enough time on the road, I will also have taught you for a month. You returned the Yellow Paper Umbrella to me, I took you away from the snowy plain. Both sides are even, but you did not leave the snowy ridge, so I owe you a favor. You can just act like I'm returning the favor to you!"

"Favor?"

"In the future, you and Qiushan will inevitably compete. I hope that you won't be lagging too far behind, that it's as fair as possible. This is my favor to you."

This was the first time after leaving the hot spring that Chen Changsheng felt Su Li possessed the demeanor of a worthy senior. Then he very seriously said, "The Yellow Paper Umbrella is not me returning it to Senior, but me lending it to Senior."

Su Li calmly looked back at him, then suddenly smiled, "You're not used to this warm scene, so you intentionally spoiled it?"

Chen Changsheng replied, "Yes."

Su Li said, "I'm also not too used to it, so in the future, don't ask me any similar questions."

Chen Changsheng looked at him and sincerely declared, "Senior, you truly are a good person."

Su Li looked back at him and very seriously said, "In the future, don't say these sorts of words either."

"Why?"

"Because in the future, you will know that I was never a good man in the traditional sense. I'm temperamental. If there's a single

word that I find unsuitable, I'll explode and kill someone."

"But you really can't tell! Fine Senior, although those words I said before were on purpose, it's a fact that the Yellow Paper Umbrella really is mine."

"Yeah, it seems like you really don't believe that I might explode and kill you!"

"Senior, if you could suddenly kill someone, we wouldn't need to wait until the middle of the night to dare to continue our journey."

Since the conversation was no longer agreeable, they no longer needed to say anything. In the ever-darkening twilight, Chen Changsheng began to prepare dinner and the equipment needed to sleep outdoors.

Su Li gazed at the youth bustling around the fire and slightly squinted his eyes. He slowly stroked the bamboo flute in his hand, thinking about something.

The twilight gradually retreated. After a simple meal of roast meat, Chen Changsheng extinguished the fire, ensuring that it would not become a beacon in the night.

After a wordless night, the morning arrived. The morning wind was somewhat chilly, bringing with it the smell of dew and grass. It made one feel carefree and relaxed, and the two deer had a lively step as they marched, traversing more than ten li in a short time.

Many green plants grew in this vast stretch of plains. They might have been sorghum, but these sorghum plants were just budding, not at all like the legendary green curtain of crops, much less able to cover up a figure.

So it only took a glance for Chen Changsheng to see the person standing in the field.

It was a handsome man, covered all over in armor. On his back were seven long blades, shining gloriously in the morning light.

No matter how one looked at it, he did not seem like an assassin.

# Chapter 364 - The Killing Divine General

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The man was very handsome, but his face was full of travel fatigue; it was obvious that he had arrived in haste.

The armor on him was also caked in a thick layer of dust, but it still seemed shiny, just like the man himself, who stood amongst the green sorghum, like a glowing sun.

This person did not seem like an assassin no matter how he was looked at.

Actually, this person was indeed not an assassin, although he had come to kill Su Li.

The person did not display goodwill or enmity, but he also did not hide his killing intent, his extremely pure killing intent.

Gazing at this shining man in the morning light, Chen Changsheng felt a stabbing pain in his eyes, giving Chen Changsheng a similar feeling to when he first saw Su Li on the snowy plains.

The rays of light from far away fell around the man. However, it never actually fell onto him, and the thing that reflected the sunlight was not his armor nor his face, but a shapeless barrier, which was why it was so bright.

The shapeless barrier and the brightness did not need to be

explained. He was a true expert of the Star Condensation Realm.

With a glance, Chen Changsheng confirmed that the man was not the assassin in the birch forest from the day before—the man was just too bright, unable to hide his existence. Also, it was obvious that the man did not seem to want to do such things at all—he just stood in the morning light like this, waiting for Chen Changsheng and Su Li's arrival in an upright manner.

Chen Changsheng exited the carriage. He untied the rope on the neck of the furry deer, and gently patted their bottoms. Right now, the furry deer were already connected with him and understood his intentions. They ran to the higher ground several hundreds of zhang away, and then turned around to look. They were waiting for their young master to recall them.

Chen Changsheng turned around and looked into the carriage.

Su Li lay in the carriage. His eyes were closed, and he was wrapped in fur. He had fur ear plugs stuffed in his ears, and it seemed like he was currently sleeping.

“Senior,” Chen Changsheng said.

The fur earplugs in Su Li's ears obviously did not have an effect equal to Mo Yu's fur earplugs. He said, “Yes?”

When he replied, his eyes remained closed.

“In front... a person came,” Chen Changsheng pointed at the person on the uprising ground and said.

“And then?” Su Li still did not show any signs of opening his eyes.

Chen Changsheng said, “That person... is very strong, I can’t win against him.”

Su Li said with his eyes closed, “I taught you for so many days; if you still can’t handle an assassin, why aren’t you going to kill yourself?”

Chen Changsheng said, “But Senior, you just said it yesterday, that is rhetoric and an exaggeration. When meeting an opponent who is just too strong, other than kneeling, there is only running. I want to ask, at this moment, is it better to run or to kneel?”

After a period of silence, Su Li finally opened his eyes. He sat up and looked at the green sorghum ground ahead. He said, “Star Condensation... it’s not like it’s impossible for you to win.”

Chen Changsheng quickly judged and weighed it in his heart and said as he shook his head, “This... I really can’t win.”

Only now did Su Li see the handsome man who was clad in armor and the unbelievably bright light. He squinted his eyes and said, “Oh it’s that guy, then you really can’t win.”

Chen Changsheng said, “Then let’s quickly run.”

Su Li said unhappily, “Ignoring the fact that I, Su Li, have never fled in my life, even if we run... can we run?”

Chen Changsheng was just about to say that if he really did run, not many people in the continent could catch up to him. Suddenly, he saw that there was a battle horse clad in red in the distant green fields.

It seemed a little familiar.

An extremely bad idea formed in his mind.

It was because he finally recognized it, the battle horse clad in red in the distant field was actually a... Red Cloud Qilin.

Su Li said, “Xue Xingchuan’s younger brother, the twenty-eighth Divine General, Xue He. Yes, his mount is also brother with Xue Xingchuan’s mount.

Chen Changsheng forgot about running away.

There was no White Crane. He was not Jin Yulu. It was impossible for him to be faster than the Red Cloud Qilin that flew in the sky.

He had never thought that the first assassin he had truly met in

his journey to the south was actually such a powerful figure.

Thinking about it, he realized it was right. To kill Su Li, even if he was currently heavily injured, it was pointless no matter how many ordinary experts came. They obviously needed to send people at the level of Divine General Xue He.

“Greetings Sir Su. Please consider that I am fully armored, so I won’t be bowing as a greeting.”

Xue He who had just stood in the completely bright green field seemed like the very picture of a god with his brightness and might. However, his tone when speaking to Su Li was extremely polite.

Su Li looked at him without any expression and said, “With my understanding of you, you admire me very much.”

For some reason, when any words that were narcissistic to the point where people would feel disgusted came out of the mouth of the Mount Li Junior Martial Uncle, it would make people feel that it was believable.

Xue He slowly walked over, and the sunlight that was reflected constantly bent into different angles. The armor gave off a jangling sound, and he used his silence to express his agreement.

Su Li asked, “Just whose idea was it for you to come here right now?”

Xue He's brother, Xue Xingchuan, was the second Divine General of the continent. Since Divine General Han Qing began to guard the Mausoleum of Books, he became the strongest Divine General in the world, only under the Five Saints and the Storms of Eight Directions. More importantly, everyone knew that Xue Xingchuan was the Divine Empress's most loyal follower. Logically, Xue He appearing here naturally pointed to a cruel and terrifying truth, that the person who wanted to kill Su Li was the Divine Empress.

However, Su Li did not believe it was so simple, so he asked him.

Xue He said expressionlessly, "No other person's idea. It's my own idea."

Su Li went silent, and understood what he said.

However, Chen Changsheng did not understand. Since it was not the decree of the Divine Empress, nor the order of the Orthodoxy, and since the Divine General admired Su Li, why had he come to kill him, while Su Li was in a bad situation? He asked, "Why?"

Xue He ignored him. He looked at Su Li and said calmly, "Only through the unification of the north and south, with my Great Zhou unifying the world, can we truly defeat the Demon race. However, because of the existence of Sir, it has always been hard to execute. No matter if it is the imperial court or the Orthodoxy, there are many people who hope that Sir can change his mind. However, I know that Sir will not change his mind, so... you must die."

Su Li said sternly, “I... will change my mind.”

This joke was not funny, and no one believed it.

However, Su Li behaved in a very believable manner, and said sincerely, “As long as you are willing to let us leave, I will definitely change my mind about the unification of the north and south.”

Xue He went silent for a while and said, “I view Sir as an idol. I know Sir will not change his mind.”

Su Li was slightly distressed. “Why are you so stubborn? When I say I will change my mind, I will definitely change it.”

“To change his mind from external pressures. This isn’t Sir.” Xue He looked at him and said calmly, “And if Sir is no longer Sir, how will there still be mental obstructions to me killing you?”

Su Li went silent for a while and said while looking at Chen Changsheng, “Did I say it badly?”

Chen Changsheng nodded his head.

Su Li said, “Then it’s your turn to say something.”

Chen Changsheng said, “Senior. I am really bad at speaking.”

Seeing Su Li and Chen Changsheng converse, a weird color flashed across Xue He's eyes. Shortly afterwards, he withdrew his attention and said respectfully, "At the moment, the news of Sir being heavily injured and currently returning to the south is known by very few people. Dying under my blade is always better than dying under those thieves and rascals, or at least better than dying from the dirty tricks of those assassins."

Su Li shook his head, "No matter how I die, it is not good. Only living is good."

Xue He did not say any more, and extended his hand behind him to grasp the handle of a blade.

After Zhou Dufu, very few of the continent's experts used the blade, because no one could surpass him. Many of the thirty-eight Divine Generals were used to using swords, and because of Taizong's Frost God Spear, there were also a lot who used spears. As for Divine Generals who used blades, and used them well, there was only Xue He himself.

With this action, the other six thin swords behind Xue He never left the sheath, but six blade intents floated in the air. They enveloped the green fields, forming a Blade Domain.

Su Li's expression slowly faded. He also had never thought that the first person to come to kill him would actually be such a difficult person.

Chen Changsheng asked with a slightly hoarse voice, “Senior, what do we do?”

Su Li replied expressionlessly, “You can also tell, that person is just like the meat you roast. If taken cold with sauce does not work, what else can you do?”

Chen Changsheng turned around and glanced at him. He asked out of confusion, “Meat?”

“No oil, no salt.”

Su Li said unhappily and climbed down the carriage with difficulty. He looked at the green fields, before suddenly narrowing his eyes again.

The sorghum was not very high, but it was actually hiding another person.

Most likely, it was the person from the birch forest.

# Chapter 365 - Su Li's Gaze (Part One)

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At present, the northern stretches of the Tianliang County were somewhat cold. Although the sorghum had not grown that high, it was still enough to conceal a person. Presumably, this person was a true assassin that was highly skilled in concealing his traces.

Su Li paid no attention to that assassin concealed in the fields. That sort of guy who could not even bear to see the light of day, no matter how dangerous, in his eyes was still not as dangerous as the dazzling Xue He.

Xue He continued to walk towards the pair, his armor clanking as he stepped. His blade intents whistled through the air and his footsteps were firm and steady. As he got closer and closer, he warily asked Chen Changsheng, "And just who are you?

Chen Changsheng had not intentionally withdrawn his Qi, so Xue He could see that he had already entered the upper level of Ethereal Opening.

To be able to enter the upper level of Ethereal Opening at such a young age, this was by necessity no ordinary person. Xue He had never encountered this sort of person before. He impassively uttered, "If I did not know that Qiushan Jun, because of the matters of the Garden of Zhou, was heavily injured and far away in Mount Li, and if you did not have such a commonplace appearance, I really would have suspected that you were Qiushan Jun."

Chen Changsheng had finally confirmed that the demons, or the enigmatic Black Robe, for some sort of reason, had not transmitted the news to the south that he was traveling with Su Li. He could not but begin to ponder, if Xue He knew his identity, would he halt his steps? Just at this moment, Su Li's voice rang out. "If your elder brother Xue Xingchuan was here, you absolutely wouldn't mistake him for Qiushan Jun. This guy is only at the upper level of Ethereal Opening, while my family's Qiushan Jun has already succeeded in entering Star Condensation! Are you saying that you can't even see through this level of difference?"

It was only a person like Su Li who would use the word 'only' in his comments to describe a youth already in the upper level of Ethereal Opening, and it was probably only Qiushan Jun amongst this current generation of young cultivators that could steadily suppress Chen Changsheng by a full head.

This was a fact, but for some reason, Chen Changsheng felt somewhat depressed. Perhaps it was because when Su Li mentioned Qiushan Jun, his voice was very affectionate. In a moment, he had completely forgotten to tell Xue He his identity.

And it was just at this moment that Xue He had reached a position that was barely less than ten zhang from them. His hand had already completely grasped the hilt of his blade, becoming one with it. Those six blade intents were still fused into one, forming their own world.

Xue He had already finished preparing his blades. His Qi was at its peak. Only a Star Condensation expert could summon such a perfect Star Domain.

He used the blade, so his Star Domain was a Blade Domain.

Chen Changsheng could be even more of a genius, but he was still too young in the end. There was a limit to the time he could cultivate, and there was the inherent problem with his meridians, limiting the amount of true essence he could use. It was simply impossible for him to pierce through this perfect Blade Domain.

There were many times when the difference in cultivation could not be made up with things like courage, willpower, determination, or skill.

He stared at Xue He's armor that shined like the sun in the morning light, and slowly took his dagger out of the sheath.

In this very brief period of time, he had performed many calculations in his sea of consciousness. The countless examples of battles he had seen in the Daoist Canon and the library of the Orthodox Academy transformed into images that flitted past his eyes, yet he still could not find a way.

The continent's twenty-eighth Divine General, Xue He. This was unquestionably the strongest opponent he had ever encountered after he began his cultivation. Solely in terms of cultivation, he was on the same level as the Demon General couple in the Garden of Zhou. However, for the sake of entering the Garden of Zhou, the Demon General couple had used some sort of secret method to forcefully suppress their cultivation. Because of the Garden of Zhou's restrictions, when they battled with him, they had not

displayed the true strength of the Star Condensation realm.

The Golden-winged Great Peng which was roused by the burning of Nanke's divine soul had been cut down in the sky by his ten thousand swords turned dragon, but the vast majority of the power in the blow had come from the several hundred years of amassed longing accumulated by the ten thousand broken swords in the Sword Pool. The sort of will and strength had nothing to do with him, and moreover, the opportunity was no longer there. Right now, the ten thousand broken swords in the sheath of his dagger could no longer exhibit such might.

How could he defeat this powerful opponent?

Chen Changsheng gripped his dagger and stared at the approaching Xue He, his mind growing increasingly tense.

Xue He knew that he was his opponent, yet his focus was not on him. His vision rested behind, from the beginning to the end, looking at Su Li.

Not to mention being heavily injured, even if he was on the verge of death, clinging onto his last breath, as long as Su Li was still alive, he was still the continent's most formidable expert!

Su Li was also looking at him.

But in reality, Su Li was not looking at him, but at his Blade Domain.

Suddenly, Su Li's gaze rested on a space in front of him. Simultaneously, he extended his hand to grab the handle of the Yellow Paper Umbrella.

In the Yellow Paper Umbrella was the Heaven Shrouding Sword. The umbrella handle was the hilt of the sword.

Back in the snowy plains, when Su Li gripped the hilt of his sword, sword intent had encroached like fire, directly beheading a Demon General several dozen li away.

At the moment, Xue He was right in front of him, so he could even more perceive the intense danger.

Without the slightest warning, a purely instinctual vigilance caused Xue He to explode with an incomparably powerful Qi.

Just like with the previous morning light, the armor on his body instantly began to shine. With a clatter, the metal sword left its sheath and then, next to Chen Changsheng's shoulder, it slashed down at the hand with which Su Li held the umbrella.

A violent gale kicked up amongst the verdant sorghum.

Having been at his side this entire journey south, Chen Changsheng best understood Su Li's condition. Let alone moving his sword and slaying enemies, he could not even walk on his own.

He did not understand why Su Li would grip the handle of the umbrella and use his sword intent to compel Xue He to burst forth with his blade.

This was a question that Su Li posed to him.

Chen Changsheng only needed a moment of thought to find the answer. Because Su Li had taught him so much and he had learned very seriously, he could remember every word that was said.

A few days ago, Su Li had once told him that the most important moment in battle was the instant when defense shifted to offense. If one could truly catch their opponent off guard, even the strongest foe might lose. Xue He had taken out his blade seemingly because of Su Li's actions. Because of his vigilance and unease, he was compelled to act this way, but in truth, he had also been taking advantage of the situation. It was because this was the only way could he truly catch Su Li off guard. To kill an expert at Su Li's level, before Xue He had attacked, he had by necessity calculated all the details.

As expected, that most important moment in battle was precisely when defense shifted to offense, but could it bring benefits merely because it was done? No, Chen Changsheng had clearly remembered that after saying these words, Su Li had also given another explanation: the strongest opponent, in the moment when shifting from defense to offense, will always put his entire mind into it. As a result, it was also the moment where mistakes occurred easiest.

In other words, the enemy whose power was nigh perfect would

always, in the moment of shifting from defense to offense, become somewhat less perfect.

Chen Changsheng's eyes began to shine.

This was because Xue He's blade glowed like snow, and also because of the gradually flourishing morning light.

His dagger had already pierced forward.

Three Forms of Wenshui, Hanging Sunset.

The dagger hummed, carrying with it all the morning light in the sorghum field, shuddering at high speeds as it pierced towards Xue He's abdomen.

As a Star Condensation expert, Xue He had used his seven blades to form an impregnable domain. Even if it was that moment where defense shifted to offense, where there might be a point that was relatively more fragile, how could he let Chen Changsheng see through it?

Chen Changsheng was indeed unable to see through it, but there was someone who could.

Su Li only needed a glance to see where the weak point of Xue He's Blade Domain was.

He extended his hand to grasp the handle of the Yellow Paper Umbrella, inciting Xue He to attack, but his gaze had always been fixed on that place in the air in front of Xue He.

Chen Changsheng's dagger, following Su Li's gaze, thrust out.

There was a light pop, like a leather bag full of wine that had been punctured, or like a swollen sugar figurine that had been popped by some naughty child with a bamboo stick.

In that dazzling morning light which enveloped Xue He, there suddenly appeared a path.

The sharp flash had already reached his abdomen.

On that shining armor, one could even see the reflection of that dagger.

# Chapter 366 - Su Li's Gaze (Part Two)

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Chen Changsheng's dagger arrived in front of Xue He, but the real sharp sword was Su Li's gaze.

However, if a Star Condensation expert were to be defeated so easily, why would the Daoist Canon name the Star Domain as one's own world?

The bright morning light suddenly fluctuated for a moment.

Xue He's hand extended to his back and pulled out the first blade. Due to the speed of his actions, it even left behind an afterimage, as if there was a second one of him in the morning light.

The sharp, white blade edge fell even faster than the sound, chopping at Chen Changsheng's head from above.

At this moment, Chen Changsheng was about to pour all his sword energy into his strike, and could not change the direction of the dagger at all, much less block the strike. What could he do?

On the green sorghum-covered ground, there was a hum. A heavy, metal sword appeared out of nowhere, and blocked Xue He's blade.

Even with Xue He's level of cultivation, he was unable to chop the metal sword in half.

The metal sword was the Mountain Sea Sword.

Xue He had no expression. The afterimage appeared again, and with unimaginable speed, he pulled out a second blade from behind him, chopping down again.

His actions were just too quick. When the second blade fell, the Mountain Sea Sword had only just met the first blade. According to Chen Changsheng's level of cultivation and strength, he was unable to follow such great speeds at all, because cultivators of the Ethereal Opening realm could not have such quick striking speeds. However, the way he struck was just different from other people. When he struck out, he did not need a movement in the wrist, in his fingers, nor any movements at all. He only needed the slight control of spiritual sense, and a sword would fly out of his sheath, into the world, blocking the blade in Xue He's hand.

The second sword was the South Stream Temple's Holy Maiden Sword.

Xue He's pupils restricted slightly, obviously being surprised by the two famous swords that Chen Changsheng had produced out of nowhere. However, the speed of his hand did not decrease at all, and another afterimage appeared in the morning light with a third sword.

Almost at the same time the third blade fell, Chen Changsheng summoned the third sword.

Only a true powerful sword, a sword that was preserved

relatively well, could block the powerful blade of Divine General Xue He. As a result, the third sword was the Demon Commander's Banner Sword.

Everything happened too quickly, only occurring in a moment.

The morning light flashed slightly, and another afterimage appeared. It was like Xue He had turned into six people, drawing six blades, chopping at Chen Changsheng's head from above. It seemed as though Chen Changsheng was just in front of him, silent and unmoving, but with six swords appearing out of nowhere, blocking in front of him.

Only now did continuous sounds of collision appear, as if it was a series of thunder rumbling in spring, blooming in the green fields.

Xue He's blade was too quick. With only his strength, it would have been impossible for Chen Changsheng to receive all of it. It was just that Xue He probably did not think that the teenager would actually have such weird methods—just what were these swords? However, that was not the end. Xue He's six afterimages disappeared at the same time, returning to the main body. The strike that he had sent at Su Li actually turned and flew over, chopping at Chen Changsheng's neck.

This was his first strike, also his last strike. It was the true strike.

When the strike fell, the seven blades formed a perfect world again. His Blade Domain was completed once again, and the holes that had once existed completely disappeared.

Between his strikes, Xue He's gaze was very cold, as if it was asking Chen Changsheng whether he still had more swords. The seven blades created a terrifying blade energy, crushing Chen Changsheng to the point where breathing had become extremely difficult. His constant thoughts also seemed to slow down, otherwise he probably would have thought, I even have to tell you the fact that I have ten thousand swords? It was just that at this moment, even if he had all of the ten thousand swords, it was pointless, because Xue He's Blade Domain was there again. His dagger was unable to break through it, unable to be thrust into the opponent's body. The difference in cultivation was just too hard to make up for.

Fortunately, Su Li was still behind him. Looking at Xue He, his gaze was like a sword that had been washed in the water of autumn

His gaze rested on Xue He's rib as he declared, "Celestial Storehouse."

The dagger in Chen Changsheng's hand went to where he said.

Xue He's expression was slightly afraid. He had used subtle and clever methods to recreate the Blade Domain, but somehow Su Li could still tell with a glance, and find the only weakness it had.

However, he was not worried because Su Li was already injured and could only make sounds , not attack. As an expert at the Star Condensation Realm, with his armor, the Ethereal Opening teenager would not be able to strike through. As a result, he did

not think deeply, and decided to quickly end the battle. He no longer paid attention to Chen Changsheng's swords—if this battle where the weak had defeated the strong was analyzed afterwards, other than Su Li's gaze and Chen Changsheng's strength and mental state that far exceeded his age, the most important reason was that Xue He made a fatal mistake at the most important moment.

He did not think that the seemingly ordinary dagger in Chen Changsheng's hand was actually one of the sharpest daggers in the world. After the baptism of wind and rain in the Garden of Zhou, the dagger contained the sword intent of the Dragoncry Sword. It had its own sword spirit, and inherited Chen Xuanba's extremely brave death wish from countless years ago. It actually had the strength to surpass cultivation realms.

With a soft squelch, the dagger in Chen Changsheng's hand pierced through Xue He's bright armor. It broke through his body that was tough like metal and stone from Purification, and continued to advance like a violent wind, as if it was going to destroy everything before the edge of the dagger.

An angry roar of shock and pain resounded.

Xue He had never imagined that his temporary negligence would allow the Ethereal Opening teenager to succeed in placing him in such a dangerous position. All of the true essence in his body surged violently.

It was difficult for Chen Changsheng's dagger to advance. Xue He had used his entire cultivation, condensing the Star Domain before

his chest, forcefully using the true essence to stop the dagger. The blade in his hand continued to chop at Chen Changsheng's neck. Not to mention that it was difficult for Chen Changsheng's dagger to continue deeper, even if it could, it would only heavily injure Xue He at most, while the blade would definitely land on his head.

Just like this.

Chen Changsheng knew that he had lost.

He had never imagined that a Star Condensation expert actually could explode forth with such terrifying battle prowess, actually able to turn true essence into something that was seemingly tangible.

For him to cultivate to Ethereal Opening at his age, he was already considered an exceptional genius. However, before a Star Condensation expert, he still seemed unable to withstand even a single blow, even with Su Li's guidance, even though he had already displayed exceeding strength him. Losing to Xue He was actually a very logical matter. But, why did he feel slightly unwilling? Why was he unwilling to die, or in other words, unwilling to immediately die, and still be unable to properly wound Xue He? Chen Changsheng did not think like that. He knew he could injure Xue He, so he continued to attack, ignoring the fact that he could die in the next moment.

In battles between cultivators, scenes where the sword energy temporarily changed in the end rarely occurred, because it was betraying one's general idea of cultivation and philosophies of cultivation, unless it was before the strike, as the changes were

already hidden in the sword move beforehand. Such a sword move was very rarely seen. In the recent years, the most well-known sword move like that was called the Burning Heaven Sword.

The Burning Heaven Sword was a Mount Li Sword Technique, a secret move created by Su Li himself. Just by its wondrous nature, it was even above the Secret Sword of the Golden Crow.

What Chen Changsheng used was the Burning Heaven Sword. He knew this type of sword move, and had used it in the Grand Examination before, except he used the fist instead of the sword at that time. As for right now, it was truly the first time he had used this sword move.

Chen Changsheng's dagger flicked upwards in an incomprehensible fashion, and drew a line that seemed completely natural on Xue He's bright armor, cracking the armor as it went.

The wilderness that was like it had been set on fire by lightning spat flames at the sky.

An extremely clear swish resounded.

A stream of fresh blood poured out, and Xue He's left arm was chopped off, sent flying in the sky.

Almost at the same time, Xue He's blade landed on Chen Changsheng's neck.

A huge thunderous explosion reverberated, and the flames in the wilderness were completely extinguished.

Chen Changsheng's knees landed heavily on the ground before the carriage, and the ground trembled, causing dust to fly into the air.

Only at this moment did the Mountain Sea Sword and the other five swords in horrible conditions fall out of the sky. With a sound, they landed beside him.

# Chapter 367 - Su Li's Gaze (Part Three)

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Silence.

Xue He's left arm was already severed, and he was covered in fresh blood from chest to shoulder.

His face was pale and his right hand held onto the blade which was placed upon Chen Changsheng's neck

Chen Changsheng's head was not chopped off.

Xue He's blade energy was already exhausted, unable to continue forwards anymore.

Between the edge of the blade and Chen Changsheng's neck, an old umbrella appeared at some moment.

A rather tired voice uttered, "You have lost."

The old umbrella was in Su Li's hand, and the voice originated from his mouth.

Xue He pulled back the blade, and slowly, but heavily took two steps back. He looked at Su Li with a pale complexion and asked with a slight frustration, "This... is that Yellow Paper Umbrella?"

Afterwards, he looked at Chen Changsheng who was still in front

of the carriage. He looked at the teenager covered in dust and confirmed that his head was still on his neck. The frustrated emotions on his face increased, and he mumbled, “How is he so sturdy?”

Previously, when he had chopped down with that blade, despite the destruction of his Blade Domain, he had concentrated all his cultivation and struck out with the full strength of a Star Condensation expert. Even if Su Li exceeded expectations and still had some battle power, even if the Yellow Paper Umbrella could block all sharp edges in the world, it would still have been unable to stop the transfer of force. Logically, no matter what, Chen Changsheng’s neck should have been chopped off, but looking at it now, it was actually completely unharmed.

Xue He was very confused. Just what material was the teenager’s body made of, actually even more exaggerated than a perfect Purification by countless times.

Suddenly, the carriage collapsed. It turned into countless fragments, which formed a pile half a foot tall on the ground below the carriage.

Su Li fell on the ground and coughed several times from the dust. He waved his hand without stop.

Chen Changsheng stood up with great difficulty, and place his dagger horizontally in front of himself, ready to try and receive Xue He’s next attack. At this moment, he was in terrible pain, and his sea of consciousness had been shaken to the point where it could collapse at any moment. The world before his eyes was a

blur, and he could fall unconscious at any moment. Fortunately, Su Li's gaze was very accurate, so he could see through the blade moves, and point out the only flaw in Xue He's Blade Domain with no difficulty. If he said Xue He was defeated, Xue He must have been truly defeated.

Chen Changsheng's dagger had caused a deep wound through his armor. Although he was unable to break through his true essence defense and pierce the heart, the sword energy of the Burning Heaven Sword had already completely shattered the meridians on the left half of his body. Xue He no longer had the power to battle. If he could leave there alive, who knew how long it would take him before he could recover his strength.

Xue He covered the area of his severed limb that constantly bled with his other hand. He looked at Chen Changsheng, and his emotions were complicated. No matter how he imagined it, he never would have thought he would actually suffer defeat under the dagger of this teenager.

Suddenly, he thought of a certain possibility. His expression changed slightly and he asked, "You are... Chen Changsheng?"

Chen Changsheng had just come back from a waltz at the edge of death, so he was still rather distracted. The strength of Xue He's blade was still wreaking havoc in his sea of consciousness, so he was unable to hear him clearly at all.

Xue He thought that he was silently admitting it, and could not help but stare blankly. He wanted to say something, but could not say anything in the end. He turned his gaze at Su Li and said, "I

never thought that Sir Su Li can still strike with a sword. My journey really has brought disgrace to my name.”

Su Li raised an eyebrow and responded in a rather unsatisfied manner, “This is only an umbrella, not a sword. If I struck with a sword and you were still able to stand, it’ll be me who should feel disgraced.”

Xue He stayed silent for a while, and discovered that what Su Li had said was irrefutable. He stayed silent for a while again, and then asked for guidance sincerely, “Sir, is my blade really not as great as Wang Po’s?”

Of the thirty-eight Divine Generals of the continent, very few people used the blade, and none of them used the blade as well as Xue He. However, in the continent, there was another expert who used the blade, and was believed to be the strongest blade-user after Zhou Dufu. That person was Wang Po of Tianliang. Whenever people mentioned Xue He, they would praise that his blade was incredible, but they had to include a sentence, that it was just not as great as Wang Po’s.

Today, Xue He had come to kill Su Li, but in the moment where his life was about to end, the matter that he could not let go the most was not Su Li’s death, nor his own death, but this matter.

He wanted to hear what Su Li had to say about it, and only like this could he pass away peacefully, or in other words, convinced.

“You obviously aren’t as great as Wang Po, no matter in the blade

or in person.” Su Li did not give the Divine General at the brink of death any comfort or warmth, and said very directly.

Xue He did not become angry, and asked for guidance seriously, “Why is that?”

Su Li said, “Wang Po only uses one blade, and you use seven, so you obviously aren’t as great as him.”

It was as if Xue He finally understood something, and knew that if he understood what he had said, he would definitely have had a great advancement on the path of the blade. Just when he began to feel happy, he suddenly remembered that he was about to die, so he could not help but laugh at himself.

Chen Changsheng was knocked rather absent-minded by the blade, and finally slowly regained his senses at this moment.

Su Li did not speak, and nor did Xue He. There was silence.

He looked at Xue He and then looked at Su Li. He asked with some frustration, “Next... what do I do?”

Su Li looked at him like an idiot and retorted, “What to do next? Obviously quickly kill him, and then continue our journey.”

Xue He looked at Chen Changsheng and also felt very baffled. He thought, boy, what are you waiting for?

“Ah? Senior, you want me to kill him?” Chen Changsheng felt the most baffling person was actually Su Li.

Su Li stared into his eyes and said, “Perhaps you are still prepared for me to take action?”

Xue He said slightly angrily, “Perhaps you want me to take action myself?”

Chen Changsheng stared blankly and said, “Isn’t it possible for everyone to do nothing? Does there have to be killing?”

It became silent once again. A breeze blew past the green fields.

After a very long time of silence, Su Li sighed regretfully, “My understanding of current young people is becoming less and less.”

Xue He nodded his head in agreement.

Chen Changsheng looked at Xue He and said, “My Lord, can you treat it as if this has never happened today... Yes, what I mean is, is it possible for you to not hold a grudge?”

Xue He suddenly felt that the teenager was very pleasing to his eyes. No wonder his elder brother had said this teenager was very pleasing to the eye. The more he looked at him, the more pleasing he became. He said, “You have spared my life, I will remember this

kindness.”

Chen Changsheng looked at Su Li, and used his gaze to express doubt.

Su Li was very annoyed and said, “Since you aren’t acting, what are you waiting for? Go.”

Chen Changsheng collected the six swords off the ground and returned them to his sheath. Afterwards, he put his fingers in his mouth, and whistled twice.

His whistling skills were not good, and the whistles he made were rather flat, not pleasant in the slightest and it did not travel far. Fortunately, the two furry deer had not run far away, and came over after hearing the sound.

Chen Changsheng placed Su Li on the back of one furry deer, and then rode on the back of the other furry deer.

Seeing the two people and the furry deer that slowly disappeared into the green wilderness, Xue He said nothing. It was unknown as to what he was thinking.

Su Li sat on the furry deer and said while looking at Chen Changsheng, “I really have to give it to you.”

Chen Changsheng smiled rather embarrassingly and said, “Senior, you’re too polite.”

Su Li forcefully withheld his anger and retorted, “Polite your eighteenth ancestor, am I talking about that?”

“Why are you giving it to me then?”

Su Li said, “Are all the young people these days as stupid as you?”

Chen Changsheng replied, “Are you saying... I didn’t kill him? I think that if it was Gou Hanshi, he would also not have acted.”

Su Li sneered, “It’s very difficult for a soft-hearted individual to become great. If the future of the Human race are guys like you, then what future would we have? We’d definitely become extinct due to the demons.”

Chen Changsheng thought about it and said, “Isn’t it because that I am such a person that Senior is willing to teach me, and wants me to become the next Pope?”

Su Li went silent for a while and then said, “It seems... rather logical. But have you never thought Xue He will reveal our tracks? And take revenge against you in the future?”

Chen Changsheng said, “I haven’t thought about it in detail... Senior, if you are able to return to Mount Li alive, who would be daring enough to take revenge against me?”

Su Li said, “Hidden in the sorghum is an assassin. It’s possible that he will kill Xue He, and then kill you. Have you ever thought about this?”

Chen Changsheng turned around and looked at him. He replied with surprise, “This... I really haven’t thought about it.”

Su Li looked at his bright, clear eyes, and suddenly did not want to continue with the topic anymore. He sighed emotionally, “How can I hope for a guy like you to become Pope?”

For some reason, Chen Changsheng felt slightly sorry for him and comforted, “Senior’s insight should never be wrong.”

TL: Insight (眼光) can also be gaze or vision, hence the play on words with the title, as well as the previous few chapters.

# Chapter 368 - Zhou Tong Will Know What Liu Qing Did

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The morning sun slowly grew brighter, and the breeze gradually settled. The green sprouts that had brushed past the knees no longer swayed. Xue He released his right hand, and his broken arm no longer bled. He picked up the seven blades from the ground, and slowly returned them into their sheaths. In the entire process, a painful grimace flashed across his face from time to time. Obviously, these usually simple actions were extremely difficult for the current him.

Su Li and Chen Changsheng had already left on the pair of fury deer, but he did not leave. Instead, he just sat down and thought about a few matters as he bandaged his wounds. After the Ivy Festival and the Grand Examination, Chen Changsheng's reputation had already become widely-spread, reaching out to even beyond the capital. His brother Xue Xingchuan had specially mentioned this teenager in his letters. Xue He knew that this teenager was the youngest Principal of the Orthodox Academy in all of history, and could even represent the voice of the Orthodoxy and the imperial family had made to the Divine Empress. It was just that this teenager should have been undergoing trials in the Garden of Zhou, so why did he suddenly appear in the north of the Tianliang County, traveling with Su Li?

Obviously, the main reason why he did not immediately leave right away was not because of his pondering, but to wait for the assassin hidden in the green fields to appear. He did not know who the assassin was. Although he had learnt of Su Li's tracks from him, he only knew that since the assassin was not far away, this meant he was in grave danger—when they had left, Su Li had said

to Chen Changsheng that it was likely for the assassin to kill Xue He while he was heavily injured, and then push the matter to Chen Changsheng—Xue He also had similar thoughts himself.

A breeze suddenly appeared in the quiet fields without the slightest indication. The verdant sorghum stalks swayed gently in the breeze, revealing a shape that seemed extremely like a rock.

Swiftly, the shape disappeared again. It had probably come even closer.

Xue He extended his right hand before his body and grasped the hilt of a blade.

As a Divine General of the Zhou Dynasty, even if he could not fight anymore, he wanted to die in battle. If he really was fated to die by the hands of these treacherous people, he would rather die under his own blade.

The breeze continued to blow, but the assassin did not appear.

After an unknown amount of time, the sunlight slowly became scorching. When Xue He, who had lost too much blood, almost could not endure it, he suddenly realized that the assassin had already left.

Why did that assassin leave? Xue He could not understand it. He used the blade to support himself to stand up and then saw that on the ground not far away, someone had used a sword to write a line

of very clear words.

It was probably because the assassin had seen this line of words that he did not act.

“Liu Qing, Zhou Tong will know of what you have done.”

Xue He’s expression changed slightly. He did not imagine that the assassin was actually the legendary Liu Qing, and never imagined that Su Li and Chen Changsheng actually left behind such a line before they had left.

It was the line that had saved his life.

Five hundred li away, north of the Tianliang County by a lake, the two fury deer currently had their heads down, drinking. Chen Changsheng was currently following Su Li’s instruction to collect and wash the grass and fruit for the fury deer to eat. The lake water was slightly cold. He looked at Su Li who rested by the side of the lake and asked out of curiosity, “Who is Liu Qing?”

He had used the dagger to write the words in the sorghum fields, but the content was actually dictated by Su Li. He did not understand what it meant at all.

Su Li said, “It’s that guy who never revealed himself in the birch forest or the sorghum fields.”

Chen Changsheng was slightly surprised. He said, “That

assassin? Is he very strong?”

Su Li said casually, “When those old guys in the Pavilion of Divination were bored, they once personally made a ranking for the assassins in the continent. Liu Qing was ranked third.”

“Third in the Ranking of Assassins...”

Chen Changsheng thought about how they were followed by such a terrifying assassin along the way and immediately felt that the breeze from the lake was rather cold. He subconsciously looked around.

It was just that... the name of a terrifying assassin that placed third on the Ranking of Assassins was actually so ordinary? He was slightly confused.

Su Li opened his eyes and said, “The more professional an assassin is, the less attention he raises. That outstanding assassin who always places first on the ranking doesn’t even have a name.”

Chen Changsheng felt that what Su Li just said was rather weird. Just what kind of person was the number one assassin in the rankings, to actually receive a word of praise from even Su Li? It had to be known that even if it was the Tianhai Divine Empress or the Pope, they would not receive too much respect from Su Li. He could not think it through and turned around to ask, “Your reason for making me leave behind that sentence was?”

“Xue He is Xue Xingchuan’s younger brother. Xue Xingchuan is Zhou Tong’s only friend. If Zhou Tong knew that Liu Qing had killed Xue He, Liu Qing would definitely suffer a very miserable outcome.

“Liu Qing also fears Lord Zhou Tong?”

“The more a person cannot be in the light, the more they fear Zhou Tong.”

“Including that outstanding assassin who places first on the Ranking of Assassins?”

“He’s obviously an exception.”

“But Senior had said before, after he kills Xue He, he can fake it so that it seemed like it was me who did it. Since it’s the assassin who is third on the Ranking of Assassin, he definitely would be able to do it flawlessly.”

“I know he is Liu Qing, then as long as I live, Zhou Tong will know.”

“Will Lord Zhou Tong believe your words?”

“He doesn’t need to believe, he only needs to suspect that it was Liu Qing who killed him.”

“But... there isn’t any evidence.”

“When Zhou Tong acts, since when did he need evidence?”

Chen Changsheng thought about the terrifying rumors that surrounded Zhou Tong and thought that it was indeed like that.

The citizens of the capital all said that Zhou Tong could stop infants from crying at night. Looking at it now, he could also intimidate the assassin who placed third on the Ranking of Assassins.

He said, “I still don’t understand why that assassin wanted to kill Xue He.”

Su Li looked at him and raised an eyebrow. He said, “What I don’t understand is why you didn’t kill Xue He.”

“Divine General Xue He came to kill Senior, and not me. Just like you have said, after he knew who I was, he obviously did not have any killing intent towards me. Even if it was so, he was already incapable of killing Senior, so why must I kill him? Senior... you seem to have forgotten, but speaking of factions, Divine General Xue He and I should be closer than you and me.”

Chen Changsheng said, “On the other hand, since Senior wanted me to kill Xue He, why did Senior make me leave that sentence before?”

Su Li said, “Since you didn’t want to kill him, we obviously needed him alive. Enough favors can save us a lot of trouble.”

Chen Changsheng did not know how to reply to what Su Li said, and decided to change the topic, “I wonder when the assassin will act.”

He looked at the surface on the lake in the dusk, and was very worried. The Mount Li Junior Martial Uncle’s fame for fighting prowess was even greater than that of Zhou Tong, but now, Su Li no longer had such deterrent force, especially after he helped Chen Changsheng block Xue He’s blade.

“Assassination is an occupation that places success in the highest regard, and thus is the occupation that requires one to be most on guard.”

Su Li looked at the dusk in the lake and said, “Before completely confirming my injuries and the limits of your strength, he will not appear, much less act. He will only keep waiting like someone weak-minded.”

# Chapter 369 - A Conversation Between Two Geniuses

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The glow of the sunset near the horizon slowly disappeared, as did the sunset glow on the lake. The breeze that blew across the lake became colder and colder, and the bonfire on the lake shore was already put out. Only ashes remained and there was not much residual heat. Chen Changsheng pulled his garment tight, and looked at the lake and mountains for a long time without speaking. Just where was the assassin who did not appear in the end, but could suddenly appear at any time?

Su Li understood his current feelings and proclaimed, “I have already said, since he decided to wait, he will always continue waiting, waiting like a weak-minded person, all the way until he waits himself to death.”

What he said obviously implied some hidden meaning.

Chen Changsheng was worried about what would happen if the assassin could not continue waiting? He did not believe he had any chance in front of an expert like that.

“Senior... still has some strength?”

In the journey from the snowy plains to the south, Su Li did not even walk. In the most important moment at dawn today, he had used the Yellow Paper Umbrella to block Xue He’s last blade. This could not help but make Chen Changsheng feel a little hopeful.

Su Li lectured, “In the past few days, I accumulated a little bit of strength with great difficulty, and all of it was used to save your little life in the morning. How can I still have strength? Do you think I am those two tireless fury deer?”

The two fury deer were on the lake shore not far away. They slept with their front legs bent, and seemed to be very warm.

“Speaking of which, the final sword you used to heavily injure Xue He... was very good. It was actually able to suddenly flick upwards after the sword energy was used and directly reversed the battle situation. What sword move is that, actually so awesome?”

When Chen Changsheng heard Su Li’s question he felt very speechless. He thought that there was no way he couldn’t tell what sword move it was?

However, just like the other conversations he often had with Su Li, he knew he had to answer.

“It’s... the Burning Heaven Sword.”

When he said these three words, he felt very awkward, revealing an uncomfortable expression on his face.

However, Su Li seemed to be much more thick-skinned than him and praised, “The person who could come up with such a sword move should be very outstanding.”

Chen Changsheng could no longer continue. He hugged his knees and lowered his head, treating it as if he did not hear anything.

The Burning Heaven Sword was a secret sword technique of the Mount Li Sword Sect. Like the Secret Sword of the Golden Crow, they were all sword techniques created by Su Li.

He was unwilling to say anymore, so Su Li was no longer able to brag about himself. After saying nothing for a while, his expression became stern. He looked at him and asked expressionlessly, “Why do you know my Burning Heaven Sword?”

This, indeed, was a problem.

Cultivation sects always paid particular attention to not divulging their techniques to outsiders. Those who learned their techniques would definitely be hunted till death. Besides, the Burning Heaven Sword was not an ordinary sword technique of the Mount Li Sword Sect, but a secret move that Su Li had created himself.

“The Burning Heaven Sword... was recorded in the secrets of the Mount Li Style.”

Chen Changsheng’s expression was rather nervous as he explained it to Su Li.

Su Li thought back to hundreds of years ago, before the great war

had ended, before he had exceeded his master. He was still a naive little boy, and he gave a copy of the extremely powerful sword technique he had created to his teachers under their request... He looked at Chen Changsheng and said blankly, "So my secrets of the Mount Li Style are in your hands."

The Mount Li Sword Sect disciples who had participated in the Ivy Festival and the Grand Examination, such as Gou Hanshi, Guan Feibai and so on, had already confirmed this matter long ago. However, Su Li travelled everywhere and did not care about these matters at all, so this was the first time he found out. When he said the secrets of the Mount Li Style, he stared into Chen Changsheng's eyes, and he stressed each of his words extremely clearly, seeming rather solemn.

Chen Changsheng grew up reading in the old temple of the Xining Village, and he was also by himself after he had entered the Orthodox Academy. He did not have any teachers or schoolmates, and did not have any understanding of schools and sects at all. He naturally did not know what the secrets of the Mount Li Style meant to Mount Li, so he nodded his head, "I learned Senior's Burning Heaven Sword from there."

Su Li raised both eyebrows and said, "Only the sword manual is recorded in the secrets, with only the moves and sword paths. However, there is no method for circulating the sword essence in there. There is only the form and not the intent, so how did you learn it?"

Chen Changsheng answered honestly, "I designed two paths to circulate the true essence myself, and after my own calculations

and deductions, as well as using it twice, the strength is definitely not as great as Senior's true Burning Heaven Sword, but it can be used."

Hearing that, Su Li went silent for a very long time.

Chen Changsheng asked, "Senior?"

Su Li looked at him and said, "No wonder when I saw you use it, it felt slightly weird... you designed it yourself... since when did designing a path for the sword become such an easy matter? Perhaps you actually are a genius in the path of the sword?"

Chen Changsheng did not dare accept it and said, "It's all Senior's intelligence, I just made a few changes."

"Sometimes, changes are even harder than creating it originally. I created the Burning Heaven Sword when I was fourteen, and improved it when I was fifteen. I am an exceptional genius, so then you could you still be an idiot? To be able to create your own pathways to circulate true essence, you obviously are a genius, or even a great genius rarely seen even in a thousand years. It's just that the people in the capital are idiots, never realizing what they should have been attaching importance to. Probably even Gou Hanshi did not realize it." Su Li looked at him and praised, "Only the demi-humans who have different meridians from humans but want to use human cultivation methods can roughly understand how great the thing you have done is... no wonder the White Emperor couple allowed their beloved daughter to become your student, even giving you my secrets of the Mount Li Style."

Chen Changsheng had never felt that he was very outstanding, other than being fluent with the Daoist Canon.

It was only because people said that Gou Hanshi being fluent with the Daoist Canon was very outstanding that he understood his senior Yu Ren and he himself were also very outstanding. Instead, today, there was someone who said that he was very outstanding in the aspect of cultivation and the path of the sword, even calling him a peerless genius. Also, the person who had said it was a publicly renowned genius himself. This made him feel very surprised, very happy and also slightly disappointed.

Afterwards, when he heard Su Li mention the secrets of the Mount Li Style again, he finally returned to his senses. He said, “Senior, the secrets of the Mount Li Style were given to me by Luoluo, but it’s not mine, so I can’t give it to you.”

Su Li saw that he finally understood what he implied, and was ready to smile and extend his hand to receive the secrets of the Mount Li Style from Chen Changsheng respectfully in an unmindful fashion. At this moment, he was informing his master’s spirit in heaven, but something unexpected actually happened... this made him very mad. He thought that he had just praised him, but was it instead heard by a pig?

Chen Changsheng saw that his expression was unpleasant and wanted to ease the atmosphere. He smiled, “Senior cannot fight over stuff with juniors.”

He really was not good at speaking. This joke was not funny.

If Su Li was about to act at this moment, he would definitely directly take the secrets of the Mount Li Style off him. As a result, the atmosphere did not take a good turn, and instead became even more awkward.

“My secrets of the Mount Li Style were stolen away by the White Emperor clan. I am only taking it back from them.”

Su Li looked at him and said. The way he said it was so righteous that it seemed like it reached the clouds, and pierced a hole in the clouds so the moon could be seen. However, he knew it was just an excuse, or in other words, a way out of an embarrassing situation. At this moment, he could not even defeat Chen Changsheng so he was unable to steal it. As a result, he could only not steal it, and leave the matter for later.

The problem was that Chen Changsheng did not know. He thought Su Li really thought like this and asked out of curiosity, “Senior, why haven’t you gone to White Emperor City all these years to get the secrets of the Mount Li Style back?”

To him, with Su Li’s level of cultivation and personality, even if the secrets of the Mount Li Sword Style were lost to the White Emperor City, he should have already killed his way there for it ages ago. As a result, when he asked this question, he had directly pulled Su Li’s path out of the embarrassing situation from under his feet.

Su Li's expression became rather ugly. He thought that his praises to this little person before him really were much better heard by a pig.

# Chapter 370 - Intellectual Sword (Part One)

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Even without a path out, he still needed to forcefully leave. He was nailed down by a question, so he still needed to answer it. He looked at Chen Changsheng's eyes which were full of curiosity and said with an ugly expression, "White Emperor City... I will go there one day. How can the Mount Li Style always be left with the Demi-human race? Except who would have thought that Bai Xingye guy would be so shameless, actually getting a wife!"

Chen Changsheng thought, just what did marrying and getting a wife have to do with anything? Only afterwards did he understand what Su Li meant.

Su Li sneered, "I am not afraid of Bai Xingye. When I say I can win, I can win. But the problem is that after he married, the fight becomes two-on-one. Even if you ignored the other factors, it's still too unfair."

Chen Changsheng thought that if Senior needed to fight two Saints, then even Senior would feel helpless.

Su Li glanced at him and opened his mouth to counterattack, "What has this got to do with swords? Do you have anything else you want to say?"

In the morning, Chen Changsheng used the Mountain Sea Sword and several other famous swords. He naturally could not hide this from Su Li's eyes. He said nothing for a while, and he narrated the important matters, and only excluded a few details, such as the ten

Heavenly Tome Monoliths, the Golden-winged Great Peng and... that white-clothed girl from the Elf race.

“You actually hid so many things from me,” Su Li said with a low voice.

Chen Changsheng smiled embarrassingly, and said, “Senior, everyone must have their own secrets.”

Su Li laughed at him, “Only when you are able to keep the secrets in your throat can they be called secrets. But are you a person who lies?”

Chen Changsheng thought that although he was not good at lying, he still hid many secrets no one knew, not even Senior. For some reason, he actually became a little complacent.

Su Li suddenly began speaking without any prior signs, “In the journey from today onwards, I can only rely on you, little guy, so I changed my mind. I have decided to teach you a few moves. Don’t mistake this for a continuation of the conversation in the snowy mountains. I obviously support Qiushan. I’m only thinking about my safety.”

Only now could Chen Changsheng confirm that after blocking Xue He’s blade in the morning, Senior really did not have the capability to battle anymore. Listening to his explanation, he did not feel it was interesting, and only felt sad. The burden on his shoulders had become a lot heavier—he did not want to see this unrestrained Senior who dared to swear at the world become so

careful, so he wanted to liven up the conversation slightly.

“Senior is willing to teach me sword moves because he cares for talent.”

He looked at Su Li and said seriously, “Because in the battle in the morning, I demonstrated that I have the qualifications to learn.”

Su Li stared blankly and then laughed aloud, “You being narcissistic really has some of my style.”

Chen Changsheng thought, this was all caused by Tang Thirty-Six. With just a single thought, he was no longer unable to suppress his thoughts of the capital and the people in the capital. Weirdly enough, after leaving Xining Village, although he would always remember his master and Senior Yu Ren, but he would think of them very little. Instead, just spending a few months in the capital left him with a lot of thoughts about the capital, thinking about it at least once everyday.

The great banyan tree in the Orthodox Academy, Luoluo who stood beside him in the tree, Tang Tang under the tree who would swear at the sunset without stop every day, Xuanyuan Po who cooked in the kitchen opposite of the lake, Guardian Jin in the faraway room, Archbishop Mei who always slept—were they all well? And that lady... lady, lady, Lady Chujian—was she safe?

Chen Changsheng changed his thoughts like an arrow. He thought that he needed to return, to return alive, to quickly return... He stood up and seriously bowed to Su Li. He said

earnestly, “Senior, please teach me sword moves.”

Su Li looked at him and said, “What sword styles do you know?”

Chen Changsheng stood up and looked at the lake and mountains that slowly grew dark, as well as the stars that gradually appeared above. He cleared his throat and said, “I know Storms of Mount Zhong Lifts the Earth, Eight Hundred Metal Swords Traverse the Great River, the Orthodox Academy’s Mountain Toppling Staff, the Unequaled True Sword of the Orthodoxy, Thirteen Branches of Poplar and Willow, and the Frost Condensation of the Snow Mountain Sect. I also know the Sword of Hithering Light from the Heavenly Dao Academy, the Righteous Intent Sword from the Temple Seminary, the Army Breaking Sword from the Star Seizer Academy, the Three Forms of Wenshui from the Wenshui Tangs with the Tang Clan Sword, Many Flowers Like Embroidery, Mountain Spirit Splits the Cliff, the Mount Li Sword Style, the Welcoming Sword, the Mountain Reversing Sword, the Burning Heaven Sword of Mount Li, Playing Thrice in the Plum Blossom, White Crane from the West, Great Suspense of the Book and Ink from the South Stream Temple...”

The lake shore was very quiet, with only the clear voice of a teenager constantly sounding. The names of countless different sword techniques floated above the water in the night wind, and nobody knew when the voice would stop.

Only when the stars had covered up the entire night sky was someone finally unable to withstand it any longer.

“Stop!” Su Li looked at him and said, “Are you speed-reciting?”

Chen Changsheng was completely confused and asked, “Senior, what is speed-reciting?”

“The performers in Lin’an City like to crosstalk, and speed-reciting is one of the basic abilities that they practice. One of it is like this: The dishes that I make are roast deer tails, roast bear paws... jade. Why am I telling you this.” Su Li was rather helpless and waved his hand, “Anyway, saying up to there is enough.”

What was enough? He had heard enough, and Chen Changsheng also knew enough sword styles.

Chen Changsheng was very obedient and did not continue. He only slightly felt that he did not express everything.

“You youngster... know quite a lot of sword styles.” Su Li said while looking at him. However, there was not just astonishment on his face, and it was a very complicated expression.

Chen Changsheng said honestly, “I’ve just forcefully memorized them, and am unable to reach mastery. I can’t say I’ve truly grasped these sword styles.”

“No kidding! If you wanted to grasp the true meaning of so many styles, you would need to start practicing six hundred years before you were born.” Su Li looked at him with no expression, “Also, this is not needed. Only an idiot would try to learn so many styles.”

Chen Changsheng always felt that what Su Li said was scolding at him.

Su Li continued, “However, this at least means that your insight on the path of the sword is broad enough. Then, you should understand what I say today, so don’t think I’m scolding you.”

Chen Changsheng still felt that what Su Li said was scolding at him.

Su Li began teaching without any pause or sign, “All of the experts in the world know that Xue He is not as great as Wang Po. In the morning today, he asked me about it, and you also heard it by the side. He uses seven blades, so then why can’t he win against Wang Po’s single blade? This has nothing to do with biting off more than he could chew, and also has nothing to do with being distracted. It is related to the essence of the sword.”

Chen Changsheng asked, “What is the essence of the sword?”

Su Li pulled out the Heaven Shrouding Sword from the Yellow Paper Umbrella and placed it across his knees. He pointed at it and said, “What word is it like?”

This was the first time Chen Changsheng had observed the famous sword up close, even though it had actually followed him for a very long time. When he was looking at it carefully, he heard the question, and without even thinking, he said, “Like the word ‘one (一)’.”

Su Li said solemnly, “Correct, the spirit of the path of the sword is about ‘one (—)’.”

Chen Changsheng stayed silent for a little before saying, “But... Senior, didn’t you say that the spirit of the path of the sword was about the sword the other day?”

Su Li said angrily, “Can we still talk properly?”

# Chapter 371 - Intellectual Sword (Part Two)

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Chen Changsheng had originally wanted to ask just what the heck did the essence of the path of the sword have to do with how great Wang Po and Xue He's blade techniques were? However, after seeing Su Li's angry appearance, how could he dare say that, so he replied sincerely, "Yes."

"Then let me continue. The spirit of the path of the sword is about 'one (-)'."

This time, while saying the word 'one', Su Li stressed it, so as a result, it sounded very much like 'one hundred million (亿)'.

TL: One (-) and one hundred million (亿) sound similar in Chinese, with just a difference in stress of tone.

Chen Changsheng asked seriously, "You are saying... cultivating the path of the sword requires one to be single-minded?"

Su Li thought about it and said, "Yes and no."

Chen Changsheng thought about it and said, "Then... is it yes or no?"

Su Li stared into his eyes and said, "Anyway, it's all about the word 'one'."

Chen Changsheng lowered his head again and said, "Yes."

“I’ve already said that the sword is a lethal weapon, and those who are not Saints should not use it. This actually also means that the sword is also a sacred weapon.”

Su Li quietly looked at the Heaven Shrouding Sword in his hand. His right hand grasped the hilt, and the index and middle finger of his right hand pinched the sword, slowly sliding past. He said, “Horizontally, the sword is a mountain range in the flat plains, the metal chains at the bottom of a great river, and vertically, it is a feathered arrow that flies in the sky, a drop of rain from the sky. To point down means that it wants to open the ground to see the abyss of the Yellow Springs, and to point up is to... burn the heavens.”

“The reason why it is like this is because of its shape, because of its intent.”

“The shape of the sword is one (—), and the intent also needs to be one (—).”

“Only with the shape and intent fusing can the spirit also become one.”

“No matter how many sword styles you know, it is still not as great as training one sword style to the limit.”

“Even if you have tens of thousands of swords, you can only choose one sword from within.”

Su Li said while looking at Chen Changsheng, a deep meaning hidden within his words.

Chen Changsheng seemed to be in deep thought, and he really was in thought—the points that Su Li had raised on the path of the sword was not new. There were many similar records in the Daoist Canon, but it just did not match with what he thought.

Su Li said, “Of course, in the very beginning, it is still good to learn a little more, to broaden your insight before choosing the most suitable style. It won’t be so much that it’ll dazzle you. Just like when I was fifteen, I knew so many sword styles that I couldn’t even remember all their names, which was why I had accomplishments later on. Anyway, it’s just some activities like looking at mountains or lakes. It’s rather complicated, understand it to the best of your ability.”

Chen Changsheng did not need to seriously think about it and he understood most of it. It was just that teachings at such a level were a little too great, and they were matters for later. But, what was he going to do now, knowing that the assassin was currently hiding in the night, and not knowing how many more powerful opponent he would meet on their journey to the south. It was even possible that countless experts were hurrying towards them right now.

Su Li looked at him and said, “Speaking about the battle in detail, your situation is a little weird. You clearly have a lot of true essence, but for some reason, your output in battle is instead really terrible.”

Hearing this, Chen Changsheng admired Su Li so much that he could almost prostrate himself on the ground. In the capital and the Garden of Zhou, he had been teased or taken pity on for his true essence for being too thin. Only Su Li could see where his true problem lay.

This was indeed a very troublesome problem. He thought of Luoluo, Nanke and those people with special bloodlines, who used their endless amounts of true essence to carry their fame. He envied them very much. It was just that the problem was involved with the problems of his meridians in his body. He was unable to explain it too thoroughly, and so he could only silently wait for Su Li's next words.

"The greatest feature of the Star Condensation Realm is the existence of the Star Domain. If one wanted to break through it, perhaps they would use an even greater cultivation level to forcefully suppress it, use sword energy to crush it or use enough true essence to forcefully attack one point. Your level of cultivation is not enough, and the true essence output from your sword moves is also not enough. Even if your dagger is sharp enough, it is unable to enter the world of someone else."

Su Li glanced at Chen Changsheng's dagger. He said, "Fortunately, most of the Star Condensation experts have undeserved fame, and their Star Domains are far from perfect. They all have weaknesses and flaws. If the opponent does not move, perhaps he can use his level of cultivation and bearing to cover up the weaknesses and flaws, but once he starts moving, they can definitely be seen. As a result, what you need to learn the most right now is how to see the weakness of an opponent in the Star

Condensation realm.”

Chen Changsheng thought about the battle in the morning and said, “Just like how you saw through Xue He’s flaws?”

“Correct, but if you really wait for the opponent to move and then see it, it will often be too late. As a result, according to your current cultivation, the best method is to calculate beforehand, and choose a few locations even if you have to guess.”

“How do you calculate?”

“Age, cultivation, body strength, body state, the move that has the highest chance of being used, the features of their Star Domain, how much true essence, background sect or school, customs that they follow, features of the geography, eating habits, marital status, number of children...”

“Senior, what has it got to do with their marital status and the amount of children they have?”

“Those who are married will obviously be slightly less courageous, and their body strength will be slightly weaker.”

“Then what about the number of children?”

“If they just had a kid, that person will definitely be powerful and difficult to defeat, because he would have too many things that he is attached to and unwilling to let go of.”

“What if he has seven children?”

“That person will also be very terrifying, because it is very possible that he doesn’t fear death.”

“...so speaking of it this way, being married for too long will make you extremely fear death?”

“You speak typical words of the inexperienced and those that lack knowledge. Just what is terrifying about the opponent? I fear that you think of suicide every day.”

“...Senior, we are talking about important stuff, so please stop making trouble without reason.”

“Who’s the one making the trouble?”

Su Li indeed was not causing trouble. He gave Chen Changsheng thirty-seven detailed examples. No matter if it was age, cultivation, body strength, body state, background sect or school or skin tone, they all carried importance in battle. According to what he said, if Chen Changsheng was able to learn this sword style, he would be able to see the flaws of a Star Condensation opponent very easily.

The sword style did not have any moves, and did not require certain levels of true essence or cultivation. It only required intelligence and great abilities in calculation, giving the sword-user an all-seeing mind that could see through the world. As a result, it

was called the Intellectual Sword.

The night passed slowly and the stars remained in the sky. Su Li treated the sword as a brush, writing and drawing on the ground by the lake. He explained the connections and changes that these things that seemed completely unrelated could bring. Chen Changsheng slowly accepted the ideas regarding the Intellectual Sword, and listened with great attentiveness and seriousness. His mind constantly thought quickly, unwilling to miss a single sentence or even a single word.

Finishing the explanation of the Intellectual Sword, Su Li lay down between the two furry deer and started sleeping.

Chen Changsheng sat by the lake. He did not sleep because he could not sleep.

Before his eyes were a series of densely packed words and extremely complicated calculation processes.

He was good at forcefully memorizing things. However, his ability in this aspect was really ordinary.

Without enough intelligence, how could he learn the Intellectual Sword?

He was unable to grasp this sword style that seemed easy but was actually extremely complicated.

Just at this moment, he suddenly thought of that Lady Chujian. There seemed to be white clothes drifting on the surface of the lake before him. If it was her who had extreme talent in the area of calculating and deducing who came to learn this sword style, she probably would have learned it very quickly.

# Chapter 372 - Polishing The Sword Before The Battle (Part One)

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If one were to view the Intellectual Sword as a topic, the topic would have far too many starting points, far too many factors, and far too much information. Even just confirming them all would be far too strenuous, not to mention calculating the final outcome.

Chen Changsheng decided that it would impossible for him to perform such calculations, or at least it would impossible to complete one round of calculations in the heat of battle. He even began to doubt that anyone could complete this sort of calculation, except that Su Li's performance in the battle that morning was proof that at least he could do it. Of course, Su Li was no normal man, but if he could do it, perhaps it meant that it was possible.

The dark lake and the distant mountains were right before his eyes, so he very quickly broke out of his discouraged and fearful mood. He thought about how the Yeshi Step had so many positions, but he knew them by heart and could even use them. Even if he did not have the talent to calculate and see through the hearts of others, perhaps he could use this somewhat stupid method to reach his goal. He did not have the time to perform the calculations in battle, so he should just simulate countless scenarios in advance, turning these calculations into instinct, and perhaps truly saving himself some time.

The question was, how would he simulate these countless scenarios? If he were back at the capital, there would be some possibility, but out here, where would he find so many Star Condensation experts to battle? If he were to fail at those

problems, would he not be killed by his opponents?

He realized that there were countless glimmers of stars in the dark lake before his eyes. Those were the reflections of the stars. He lifted his head up to gaze at the night sky, only seeing the countless stars on the pitch-black curtain of the night calmly looking back.

The Human race (the divine race) is the world's most complex subject of research. Because they have different levels of intellect and different experiences in life, the changes in their mood and the movements of their minds will create even more states that vary according to the situation. As a result, their final outlook will be nothing like another's. They are incredibly complex, so we can only compare ourselves with the boundless sky of stars.

This was the rueful sigh of regret spoken to the starry sky many years ago by that most erudite Pope who had contributed the most knowledge to humanity, then recorded in the annals of the Orthodoxy. In that generation, there was also a learned demon scholar called Tong Gusi who, when traveling south to Snowhold Pass, saw the sky filled with stars, and in his amazement, said something similar.

As he looked up at the stars, Chen Changsheng thought of those words, sensing his own distant red star that not even the eyes could see. He lifted his right hand and pointed at a certain region of stars in the night sky, then took a star chart down from that place and placed it in front of his eyes—of course, this was just a visualization, not something that actually happened.

On that very last night in the Mausoleum of Books, he had taken the lines of the seventeen monoliths of the front mausoleum and formed them into a star chart—precisely the one that was in front of his eyes right now. To the entire starry sky, the star chart was only a tiny part, but upon it were millions and millions of stars. Before his eyes, they emitted rays of light, some bright and some dim. They seemed solemn and eternal, serene and unmoving.

However, he knew that these stars were incessantly moving.

Every one of these stars was a factor itself. The movement of the stars indicated that the stars were changing. Like the increase of age, like the failing of strength, like the decline of courage, like the gradual onset of the omens of death. If the traces in the starry sky represented fate, then did the changes in the stars represent how the many elements that decided fate were changing?

The combination of the orbits of the stars was fate. Everything lay within them.

Not even the Star Domain of a Star Condensation cultivator could surpass this scope. The movement of the many stars was just like the movement of Qi. The brightening and dimming of the stars were like the strengthening and weakening of Qi. Every single factor, every single piece of information, could find its counterpart in the orbit of the stars. It was just that those factors were even more real, not as profound. In simpler words, those factors could be calculated and observed.

If one could make the boundless sky of stars seem simple and concise, if one could find a way out of the sky filled with stars, one

would naturally be able to find the weak point in a cultivator's Star Domain. However...the stars moved, and this did not change even when they formed the many factors of a cultivator. So how could one obtain that final, clear result?

Without using much time, Chen Changsheng understood. Just like the star chart, the position of the star did not mean that the star would always be there. Rather, it was just the place where, over the course of millions and millions of years, the star most often appeared. It was just a question of probability. A star was most likely to appear at the present position, so the star was there. A sword was most likely to pierce at this place, so that was where it would pierce. A Star Domain would most likely change this way, so that was how it would change. It was very difficult to describe it in words, but he understood. Then he began to work on his first problem.

In his first time cultivating the Intellectual Sword, he did not slash at a Star Condensation expert, but at the entire sky of stars. He calmly gazed at the starry sky, countless streams of light flowing in his bright and limpid eyes. Each stream of light was a factor or a parameter. He earnestly remembered everything in front of his eyes, then began to calculate, until he was caught in a trance.

At five o'clock in the morning, Chen Changsheng opened his eyes. Through the entire night, he had not slept. The positions of the countless stars had gradually been seared into his sea of consciousness. Those extremely complex calculations had required countless amounts of spiritual sense and mental strength. Yet for some reason, he did not feel exhausted. When his body was struck by the morning wind, he even felt refreshed.

He had already touched upon the true meaning of the Intellectual Sword.

Of course, he clearly understood that for him to truly grasp the Intellectual Sword, he would still need many more nights.

Su Li was reclining against the warm body of one of the furry deer. He looked at him with some surprise, then began to chuckle.

In the following days, Chen Changsheng continued to observe the starry sky, developing and polishing his Intellectual Sword of which not even a prototype had yet taken shape. Su Li gave him no further instructions, sleeping very soundly every night, but he deliberately decreased the speed of their return south. Su Li keenly understood that Chen Changsheng was currently at the most crucial stage. If he could truly grasp the Intellectual Sword, perhaps the next time he faced off against a Star Condensation expert, he really could catch one off guard and obtain victory. Therefore, he would prefer to sacrifice a little of their speed.

Yes, whether it was Su Li who was passing down the sword or Chen Changsheng who was learning the sword, from the start to finish, they had restricted the opponents they would meet on the journey south to the Star Condensation Realm. This was because cultivators under Star Condensation would not be able to beat Chen Changsheng, and if a cultivator above the Star Condensation Realm actually came, such as one of those old monsters at the Saint Realm, what meaning would there be in polishing the sword before the battle?

If the situation continued to develop like so, perhaps in another couple dozen days, Chen Changsheng really could have borrowed the sky filled with starlight to successfully polish his Intellectual Sword. Regretfully, this world would never give the severely injured Su Li such a long amount of time. Even more regretfully, Chen Changsheng's opponent finally appeared. With a battle ahead, no matter how one saw it, there was no time for such a painstaking labor as polishing the sword.

For Chen Changsheng to finish polishing his Intellectual Sword, he would still need several dozen, or even several thousand, ordinary and uninteresting nights of deep spring. Two hundred li from Tianliang County, on a barren mountain, an extremely enchanting man appeared. That man was wearing lipstick and wearing a dancing dress. He looked just like a dancer. In brief, he was just like Xue He several days ago. No matter how one looked at it, he did not seem like an assassin.

Chen Changsheng was rather confused. "Why is it that when they appear, they never seem like assassins? Or is it that to be considered a good assassin, you can't seem like an assassin? Is this the creed of assassins?"

"The creed of assassins? What shit are you pulling?" Su Li teased, "Appearing with such a ghastly appearance, do you think they were happy about it? It was just that they were too rushed, so where could they find the time to change clothes?"

# Chapter 373 - Polishing The Sword Before The Battle (Part Two)

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Only avengers that were willing to die in their hearts would dare to come and kill Su Li. This was because the entire world knew that since they could not beat him, so naturally, killing him would be even harder. By seeking to kill him, they would only invite death and disgrace. But now the situation had changed. He had been subjected to the attacks of demons for several days and nights and had only escaped by a fluke, walking away with grievous injuries. To those people that wanted to kill him, this was undoubtedly their best chance, a chance that they had to grasp.

When Xue He learned that Su Li was heavily injured, he had been making his patrol through the military camp in the town. Without even having the time to take off his armor, he had been dragged off by a few old subordinates to drink quite a few rounds of wine. While his face was red and his ears were hot, he suddenly received this news. Without even thinking about it, he tossed away his glowing lamp, spilled his wine, and with a single slap, knocked out two officers that still insisted that he keep drinking. Riding his Red Cloud Qilin, he rushed off to the snowy plains, his mind wholeheartedly fixated on finding Su Li as quickly as possible, and then killing him. Where could he find the time to think about other things?

The man that had appeared on this barren mountain was in a similar situation. Four days ago, he had been in Xunyang City acting in an opera for his own amusement. He had invited the finest theater troupe from Lanling City and had invited only his closest and most influential clients. He had been singing that most famous ‘Spring Night Melody’, acting the part of the most

charming and pleasant bride. Just as the song began its crescendo, his brows flying and eyes gentle, he suddenly saw the bishop sitting below sending a signal with his eyes. Soon after, he heard the message in his ear.

Su Li was heavily injured, possibly in the north of Tianliang County? He exhaled a breath of cold air and looked askance to the heavens. With an indescribable air of contempt and sorrow, he calmly gazed upwards for a few moments. Then with a bang, he leaped off the stage, kicked off his cloud shoes, threw off his headscarf, seized one of the Xunyang City Guard's Lightning Horses, then exited the provincial city, rushing off towards the county's north.

Chen Changsheng had said that they did not seem like assassins, but this was because they had never been assassins. In addition, it was just as Su Li had said, they had come over in a rush. They feared that they would be too late—Su Li was heavily injured. They could wait for their whole lives and not see such an opportunity again. How could they find the time to change clothes? So Xue He came in his shining armor while this man came in the elegant dress of a dancer, with ribbons and ruined makeup. They were wearing the clothes that they wore at the time, so of course, they would not have the appearance of assassins.

Xue He's shiny armor had been covered with dust, and this man's dancing dress was also smeared with mud. His face was rather fatigued and haggard, the makeup that had still not been blown off by the wind endowing him with a strangely enchanting and beautiful feeling.

As he looked at Su Li, his eyes grew increasingly bright, the happiness on his face growing increasingly prominent. He lifted his sleeve to cover up his mouth, making him extremely charming and seemingly extremely pleased with himself. And yet there was also a pain that seemed to originate from the deepest depths of his soul.

"With such pains, I was finally able to find you. It was truly not easy, but when I think about how you will soon die at my hands, the greatest pains would all be worth it. In these three thousand li of northern plains, we were actually able to meet. I must say that my luck is not too bad."

Hearing these words, Su Li was somewhat moved. He said to Chen Changsheng, "Your luck is really good. We just happened to need an opponent a little stronger than you, but not too strong, and then one just happened to appear."

With his gaze, it was very easy for him to see that this man was at the initial level of Star Condensation.

The man's slender brows perked up as he asked with astonishment, "Do you two not know who I am?"

Chen Changsheng very earnestly nodded his head.

The man gently lifted his flowing sleeves and softly introduced himself. "I am Liang [Hongzhuang](#)."

(TN: Hongzhuang (红妆) can variously mean 'red makeup', 'beauty', or 'splendid feminine attire'.)

Liang Hongzhuang was a very famous person. In Tianliang County, and even in the entire northern part of the continent, he was incredibly well-known. This was because of his family, because of his elder brother, because many people knew that he loved to act in operas and to dance, and because he was very strong.

Chen Changsheng and Su Li glanced into each other's eyes; they still did not know who this person was. Chen Changsheng could recite the entire Daoist Canon from back to front, but on the true world of cultivation, he was truly very ignorant and inexperienced. As for Su Li...there were very few names he needed to remember on this continent, and Liang Hongzhuang had very obviously not achieved that distinction.

This was absolutely an enormous humiliation. Liang Hongzhuang frowned, but he was not angered. He sighed, "It somewhat hurts my pride, but if I can kill Sir Su, then perhaps, even more people will know my name."

Chen Changsheng asked, "Could it be... you came here to kill Senior so that you could get famous?"

Liang Hongzhuang did not answer, he only laughed.

Su Li suddenly asked, "Liang Wangsun's Liang?"

Liang Hongzhuang's expression grew a tad more solemn. "Liang Hongzhuang's Liang."

(TN: They actually do share the same surname, Liang (梁).)

When Su Li heard this, he understood why this deranged fellow dressed in this red bridal gown wanted to kill him. Turning to Chen Changsheng, he declared, "This person really wants to kill me, so you must kill him."

Listening to this very short conversation, Chen Changsheng had not quite understood its full meaning, but he had a rough idea of what was going on—this assassin in a red dancing dress presumably had some relation to Liang Wangsun.

Seeing the approaching Liang Hongzhuang, watching the silk ribbons of his dress dance in the wind, Chen Changsheng's brain rapidly worked, continuously observing, analyzing, and calculating, seeking a gap in that dancing dress.

In order to obtain victory over an opponent, one must understand the opponent. Whether it was the Intellectual Sword or the most ordinary battle, all battles required this. He did not know who this dancer called Liang Hongzhuang was, but he knew about Liang Wangsun.

Liang Wangsun was an expert who ranked very high up in the Proclamation of Liberation, a truly famous person. What sort of famous person could be called a truly famous person? A truly famous person was a person that even an ignorant guy like Chen Changsheng knew of them. That was a truly famous person.

Chen Changsheng had very little understanding of the sects and

schools of the cultivation world, but he had a very clear understanding of the Liang bloodline because the Liang clan was the previous Imperial clan. Their cultivation, lifestyle, and blood legacies were all recorded in the annals of the Orthodoxy.

Liang Wangsun's resplendent and extravagant manner, Liang Wangsun's achievements, Liang Wangsun's style of swordplay, Liang Wangsun's attitude towards Wang Po and Xiao Zhang, Liang Wangsun's age, Liang Wangsun's three wives... countless fragments of information floated up from the floor of his sea of consciousness and then flashed before his eyes.

Just like the myriad stars in that star region, they descended down from the night sky to in front of his eyes and began to flicker. In these stars, he needed to find the most crucial space, that single path.

"Can you do it?" Su Li asked.

Chen Changsheng shook his head. His Intellectual Sword had still not reached a polished edge. No, it was more appropriate to say that not even the shape of a sword had begun to form. He couldn't even use it to see the weakness of a Star Condensation cultivator, so how could use it against his enemies?

"If you can't see it, you still have to guess."

"Senior, since you can do it, why can't you instruct me like before?"

"As I said before, in order to block Xue He's blade, I used up all the strength that I saved up."

"Does seeing through a Star Domain require strength?"

"How else?"

"I always felt that it didn't make sense."

"Only when you're so tired that you can't even open your eyes will you have the qualifications to understand this reasoning."

"Fine, then what should we do next?"

"As I said, you have to guess."

"Guess?"

"It's also a wild guess."

As they were talking, Liang Hongzhuang had already arrived.

Chen Changsheng could no longer hold back. His dagger flashed like lightning out of his sheath, thrusting at the dancing silk ribbons.

On a distant hillside, two fury deer had their heads lowered as

they grazed, not even glancing at their location.

# Chapter 374 - The Dagger Enters The Dancing Dress, Blood Droplet Falls From The Ear Lobe

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To the fury deer, the battle between Chen Changhseng and Liang Hongzhuang was far less interesting than the green grass. If there was another bystander, they would also probably think like this, because of the wide disparity of strength between the two, because Su Li had used the last bit of his energy to block Xue He's blade. However, for some reason, as the only bystander there, Su Li was instead completely focused on the battle. He did not even blink.

Liang Hongzhuang's red dancing dress floated around his body. The Qi of a Star Condensation expert exuded out in every direction.

It was a complete, or even perfect domain, without any holes to be seen anywhere.

Chen Changsheng could not see it, but just like the last thing Su Li had said to him. Even if he was guessing, guessing blindly, he still had to do it. He still had to gamble it. Of course, since it was guessing or guessing blindly, then no matter how it was looked at, there was no hope for him to win. His only advantage was that he was not like other Ethereal Opening cultivators who did not have any understanding of the Star Condensation realm.

Back then in the Orthodox Academy, when he thought that he did not successfully undergo Purification, he had actually already

succeeded. When he thought he was scared of undergoing Meditative Introspection, he had actually already guided in the starlight and undergone Ethereal Opening. When he viewed the tablets in the front mausoleum, he formed star charts from the lines on the Heavenly Tome Monoliths. This method originally was from Star Condensation. However, he was an abnormality in the world of cultivation. He always used methods of cultivation beyond his current level, or in other words, he was not faster than anyone on the path of cultivation, but he needed to look further—he knew what Star Condensation was about.

Cultivators guided in the starlight to undergo Purification. They used Meditative Introspection to turn the star's radiance into true essence, and then used the power of the starlight to open the door of the Ethereal Palace. What they needed to do afterwards was continue to guide starlight into their bodies, and illuminate stars in their Spirit Mountain. They needed to connect the stars to the openings and acupuncture points of their bodies and activate the true essence to draw their own star chart. They needed to rebuild the miniature world in their bodies and be able to draw it out of their body. That was the Star Domain.

The Star Domain was the world of Star Condensation cultivators. It was the projection of the starry sky in their bodies and the sea of consciousness of the cultivator.

The true starry sky was tranquil and eternal, serene but solemn. According to the general knowledge of cultivation, the Star Domain of a Star Condensation expert should also be perfect, without any flaws. Even if cultivators at a higher level could see the area of nothingness, it was not true nothingness, but the limit of the cultivator's level, making them unable to perfectly control

their spiritual sense and true essence.

Chen Changsheng did not believe that. He believed that there was no perfect Star Domain at all, because... the true starry sky was not a still and serene, eternal and unchanging existence. Instead, it was always a balance of dynamics. Since it was a balance of dynamics, once there was the intrusion of a foreign power, there would always be a special moment where the balance would be broken—this was the reason why Su Li was able to guide him to break through Xue He's blade. Actually, this type of understanding actually already exceeded the idea of Su Li's Intellectual Sword. It was just that, right now, no matter if it was Su Li or he himself, they were all unclear on what exactly he had understood and what he had discovered. Naturally, they would not think that this type of understanding would bring any changes to his battles and cultivations in the future, as well as the history of the entire world of cultivation.

Looking at Liang Hongzhuang whose dress was floating, countless pieces of information rapidly flashed across Chen Changsheng's sea of consciousness. He constantly calculated, feeling the Qi nearby that was like ribbons, as well as the abnormally distinct signs of true essence in the mountains. It was as if countless stars had appeared before his eyes. No one could see the relative positions of the stars to each other in such a short amount of time, much less deduce the laws that the Star Domain operated off through the brightness and relative positions of the stars in such a short amount of time, and thus, very few people were able to find the weakest point of a Star Domain. The calculative abilities of humans had a limit, and at this moment, there was a need for an ability that did not have a limit. For example, intuition, which, of course, could also be called guessing.

Hundreds of stars were bright and dim, changing in color in his sea of consciousness. There clearly were no movements, but he seemed to see the stars moving.

People were the combination of all connections, and fate was the summary of the trajectory of interactions between people. The starry sky described and explained it all. Liang Hongzhuang constantly underwent changes, growing older at the rate of one year every year, becoming duller in speed with every jug of strong alcohol and suffering pain as the rate of his hatred increased with every moment. As a result, his Star Domain naturally also underwent constant changes.

With the movement of the stars and the changes in brightness, a new chart would form.

Vaguely, in the dense fabric of stars of the Star Domain, he could suddenly see a patch of darkness. The surrounding stars seemed to become a pathway, and the darkness was the end of the pathway, leading into the unknown, perhaps into the void. Chen Changsheng did not know what it was; he was unable to confirm whether what he saw was real or not because in the Star Domain, there were many similar areas. However, at this very moment, he could only believe in himself. Even if it was guessing, he needed to be as confident as if it was actually it—Chen Changsheng thrust his dagger towards that location.

With a swish, the slightly cold air of the mountains was pierced.

Red ribbons constantly danced.

Chen Changsheng's dagger clearly was about to come in contact with a red ribbon, but it mysteriously disappeared, and then appeared somewhere else.

Su Li's expression was solemn, and his sword-like eyebrows were slightly raised.

What a fast strike, that it was actually able to break through Liang Hongzhuang's Star Domain. What a swift strike, that Liang Hongzhuang was actually unable to react.

A clear whoosh arose from the wilderness. Liang Hongshuang hurriedly retreated—he did not stop his steps until he was over a dozen zhang away.

The red ribbon fell slowly, falling under his feet.

There was a pearl on his left ear. At this moment, the pearl had already disappeared, only leaving behind a dark red pearl of blood.

Chen Changsheng's sword was thrust at his left earring, thrust at that pearl.

Liang Hongzhuang lifted a hand and touched his left ear. The touch was slightly cool, and he looked at Chen Changsheng with his eyes furrowed. He was extremely shocked and very confused. This teenager was actually able to break through his Star Domain? Just who was this teenager?

A battle of surpassing cultivation levels was not an unbelievable thing, but most of them happened within a realm, such as an initial level Ethereal Opening cultivator attempting to fight an upper-level Ethereal Opening cultivator. However, for Meditation to fight Ethereal Opening, for Ethereal Opening to fight Star Condensation, these types of battles that exceeded an entire realm rarely occurred. Even in the historic records of tens of thousands of years, there were not too many cases of success.

Of course, there were always exceptions, such as the geniuses with great innate talent that exceeded the ordinary. Back then, when Qiushan Jun was in Ethereal Opening, which cultivator of the initial level of Star Condensation dared to say that they could definitely win against him? Another example, when Chen Changsheng had left the capital, Luoluo had not broken through to Ethereal Opening, but which Ethereal Opening cultivator, including Chen Changsheng himself, dared to say that she was not as great as them?

However, Chen Changsheng did not have any obvious special innate talents. His true essence was very ordinary, and his bearing was also very normal... Liang Hongzhuang suddenly thought of a possibility and said, "Perhaps you are..."

Chen Changsheng clasped his dagger with both hands and said, "Orthodox Academy, Chen Changsheng."

# Chapter 375 - A Simple Youth

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Liang Hongzhuang's expression grew slightly cold. The tips of his brows that had been drawn incredibly thin rose up—the youngest Principal of the Orthodox Academy, the main object of the Orthodoxy's nurturing, the Pope's and Archbishop Mei Lisha's most cherished junior, was actually this youth. He knew of Chen Changsheng, or else he would not have been able to guess it at all. It was just that there were a few things he did not understand. For instance, at the young age of sixteen, Chen Changsheng had reached the upper level of Ethereal Opening. Not even Liang Hongzhuang's distantly related cousin, who he was not very close with, thought this was possible. Liang Hongzhuang was also filled with admiration, but he did not understand Chen Changsheng's previous strike.

The whole world knew that Chen Changsheng's talent lay in cultivation, lay in the willpower that arose from his erudition of the Daoist Canon. He was diligent and perceptive, but his innate talent was very ordinary. It was absolutely impossible for him to be brought up in the same conversation as Qiushan Jun, Xu Yourong, and Princess Luoluo. Then how was Chen Changsheng's strike able to surpass the gap between Ethereal Opening and Star Condensation and directly pierce through his Star Domain?

Could it be that before he had even struck, he had already seen through his dancing dress? Liang Hongzhuang turned to Su Li—the Star Domain of the Star Condensation realm seemed perfect, but in the end, it was not truly perfect. However, only a great expert at Su Li's level would be able to see through it. However, Su Li never made a noise, and even his gaze had always been fixed on Chen Changsheng's dagger, not on his own body.

"You used... just what sort of sword did you use?"

Liang Hongzhuang looked at the dagger in Chen Changsheng's hand, his slender brows flying up even higher, making him seem all the more indescribably enchanting. Chen Changsheng did not know how to answer this question. When Su Li was teaching him the sword, he had very clearly said that this sword technique could be considered under the category of the Intellectual Sword, but he had always vaguely felt that there was some sort of difference.

At this time, Su Li asked a question. He looked at Chen Changsheng, his face filled with confusion and suspicion, and asked, "Did you really guess?"

Chen Changsheng nodded his head and honestly answered, "I just made a wild guess."

Su Li's eyes slightly lit up, as if this was the first time he had set eyes on this youth. He asked another question, "The probability?"

Chen Changsheng made some mental calculations, then said uncertainly, "Seven?"

Su Li's voice suddenly went higher. "Seventy percent?"

Even his proud self who was a genius in the path of the sword felt that this answer was too astounding. Whether it was his past self that had learned the sword at the Mount Li for several centuries or

Qiushan Jun when he had first been teaching him the Intellectual Sword, neither of them would have been able to accomplish this. This was an impossible matter.

Yes, so it could not have happened.

Chen Changsheng felt somewhat embarrassed, and whispered, "I was saying seven percent."

Su Li felt that this was more like it. Although it was this way, Chen Changsheng's performance had already surpassed his reckoning. He sighed emotionally, "It's enough. At least you've left the land of wild guesses and come to just guessing."

Chen Changsheng was somewhat dazed. "What is the difference between a wild guess and a guess?"

Su Li replied, "A guess requires something to lean on, while a wild guess is just blindly grasping. Of course, they're different."

Chen Changsheng remembered the feeling he had the instant before he had attacked. He suddenly felt unsure about whether he had made a guess or a wild guess.

His attack had mostly relied on intuition, not calculation.

In many cases, intuition was an instinctual response arising from many calculations and exercises.

He faintly sensed that his strike, that strike that broke through Liang Hongzhuang's dancing dress, was subtly different from the Intellectual Sword that Su Li had taught him, but he did not know what this difference was.

Liang Hongzhuang stood around a dozen zhang away, watching as the pair talked. He suddenly began to laugh, his elegant face covered with the remnants of makeup filled with ridicule. "You two are just chatting now!"

Su Li looked at him and said, "Do you want to chat? Then let's do it together."

Liang Hongzhuang stared blankly. He had not imagined that he would receive such an answer. After a moment of silent rumination, he actually joined in on the conversation.

Because he had something he wanted to say, something that he wanted to tell Chen Changsheng. As for Su Li, he had nothing good to say to him.

He looked at Chen Changsheng and said, "How is it that you appeared in the northern part of Tianliang County? Why have you been accompanying this devil? Why are you helping him?"

In the capital, what Chen Changsheng heard of and the impression he formed of Su Li was that the Junior Martial Uncle of Mount Li was a very unworldly and able person. During this journey of ten thousand li, he realized that this impression was not

accurate, or perhaps it was more accurate to say that it was not sufficient. Su Li himself had admitted that he had killed many people, but this was the first time Chen Changsheng had heard someone so straightforwardly denounce Su Li as a devil.

"Do you know how many people he's killed? How many times his sword was washed in blood so that it could be so sharp, do you know?" Liang Hongzhuang looked at Chen Changsheng and scornfully said, "He's killed so many people, so he should have died a long time ago, but he's managed to stay alive. The heavenly laws might operate in cycles, and yet his judgment has actually come late. Today, his appointed time of death has finally come, and yet you actually want to protect him?"

Chen Changsheng did not say anything, because he did not know what to say.

Liang Hongzhuang used his hands to tidy up his attire. then once again walked over, saying, "He's a southerner, while you are a person of Zhou. He's slain so many Zhou people, so what reason do you have to help him?"

This did not seem like much of a problem, but if one were to carefully think about it, it really was a big problem.

On the snowy plains, Chen Changsheng had carried Su Li on his back as they escaped. This could be considered repayment for Su Li's kindness in saving his life. Moreover, it was only Su Li's ability that could help him return. However, after they had crossed the snowy plains, the kindness from saving his life had all been paid off. They had already returned to the realm of the Great Zhou, so

he could safely depart at any time—Mount Li was strong because Su Li was strong, while a person of the Orthodoxy was strong because of the Orthodoxy. Right now, Su Li was a heavily injured lion that had fallen into dire straits. Meanwhile, so long as the Orthodoxy had not fallen into destruction, with Chen Changsheng's identity as the Principal of the Orthodox Academy, as well as the rumors that he was cherished by the Pope and Mei Lisha, who would dare go against him? As long as he was willing to leave, regardless of if it was Xue He, Liang Hongzhuang, or any other experts that would follow, they would all take the first opportunity to escort him back to the capital.

No matter what angle one looked at it from, there was no reason for him to continue staying by Su Li's side.

Chen Changsheng glanced at Su Li.

Su Li had an indifferent expression, and he didn't say anything. This was because this was also a question that he had wanted a clear answer to, it was just that he had never asked, so Chen Changsheng had naturally never answered it.

Now, Liang Hongzhuang had asked this question. He wanted to know just what exactly Chen Changsheng's answer would be.

Chen Changsheng silently pondered for a few moments, then replied, "I came from the Garden of Zhou and then inexplicably found myself in front of Xuelao City."

Liang Hongzhuang's eyebrows tilted upward. He had not

imagined that such a thing could occur.

"In the Garden of Zhou, I thought that my death was imminent. When I left the Garden of Zhou and saw Xuelao City, I also felt my death was certain, and then... Senior Su Li saved me. Moreover, I thought that Senior being besieged by the demons was related to the plot I encountered in the Garden of Zhou... Fine, in truth, it's not that complicated... the reason is actually very simple. Senior saved me, so I naturally can't watch him die." Chen Changsheng very earnestly explained to Liang Hongzhuang.

Su Li replied, "Ten thousand li over the snowy plains and Xue He's blade. Your debt has been paid off long ago."

"Senior, you can't calculate this debt that way. To be more precise, something like life is impossible to account for." Chen Changsheng had confirmed his feelings, so his sentences also began to flow more easily. "To Senior, all you did was save my life, but to me, this life is my everything."

Su Li and Liang Hongzhuang understood the meaning behind this sentence. It was just that after living in the world of cultivation for so many years, their minds and bodies had become stained with dust, so they found it very difficult to accept this reason.

Su Li shook his head. "I believe that you don't owe me anything more."

Chen Changsheng replied, "I don't believe that."

Su Li was a little at a loss. He clearly knew that Chen Changsheng was not a worshipper of his, and he also knew that they did not share any common interests, not to mention that there was nothing like some sort of friendship between generations. Thus, he was very curious as to why Chen Changsheng had not left. It was only now that he found out that it had always been such a simple reason. Of course, a person that insisted on such a reason was definitely not very simple.

"To a bystander, it's just a life, but in reality, it's your everything... then how are you prepared to pay me back? It can't be that you're prepared to guard me for the rest of your life, working like an ox for me?"

Su Li teased him, but his eyes were warm.

Chen Changsheng was a little distressed. "I also don't think that's necessary, right?"

Su Li laughed, and Liang Hongzhuang also laughed. One was out of gratitude, one was out of ridicule. The meanings of their laughs were completely different.

"Even if you're really settling accounts, mutually saving each other should be enough to settle it. I also believe you've paid off your debt."

Chen Changsheng turned to Liang Hongzhuang and said, "I want to pay back the kindness of saving my life, so I want to confirm

that Senior is truly safe, that his life is taken care of before I depart. It's just like a sick person drowning in the water. If you rescue him from the river but don't care that he's about to die from his severe illness and take your leave, can that be considered saving him?"

Liang Hongzhuang thought about it, then assented, "It makes sense."

Chen Changsheng replied, "Many thanks... to your distinguished self for understanding."

Seeing Liang Hongzhuang's charming feminine appearance and the red dancing dress, he really did not know how to address this person.

Liang Hongzhuang gazed back and calmly replied, "I want to avenge my father's death, is that not also very reasonable?"

Chen Changsheng silently thought about this, then nodded.

Avenging his father was a reason that no one could refute, a most supreme reason.

"Since you insist on saving him, then I will have to kill you."

Liang Hongzhuang continued, "Afterwards, if I receive the condemnation of His Holiness, it will only be death. You know that I will not be afraid."

Chen Changsheng knew that with regards to these sorts of avengers, they all had firm resolves. The prestige of the Orthodoxy could not make them change their minds, so he replied, "I understand."

Liang Hongzhuang's Qi grew increasingly swift and fierce. The silk-ribboned dancing dress that lightly floated in the mountain wind was no more, but the Star Domain had grown stronger and more stable in all aspects.

He gazed impassively at Chen Changsheng and asked, "Do you have any last words?"

Chen Changsheng cordially replied, "I ask that your distinguished self be lenient."

# Chapter 376 - Seven Strikes Of The Sword, Six Taps Of The Umbrella

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Liang Hongzhuang had rushed here over thousands of li to find Su Li for revenge. He had said very clearly that it was revenge for killing his father. Since it was like that, the battle was not determined by victory or defeat, but inevitably by life and death.

Requesting the opponent to have mercy before the beginning of a life or death battle, and the fact that it was not said out of politeness, but rather a genuine sincere request from the heart—what Chen Changsheng said really caused people to be surprised, and Liang Hongzhuang did not know how to reply to it at all. He shook his head, but what happened next was not a surprise at all, because it was impossible for mercy to be shown.

The red dancing dress floated in the green barren mountain. The dust and dirt within several hundreds of li were jolted into the sky. Liang Hongzhuang arrived floating in the air, like a real ball of fire, immediately setting the area ablaze.

He surged forth like fire. It would be difficult to find an object that spread faster and more violently than fire. This teenager could see through my domain? Then if I become so fast that I can't be seen clearly, how would you see through it?

Logically, with Liang Hongzhuang's level of cultivation and his fame in the northern lands, he would not have needed to use such methods against a Ethereal Opening cultivator. However, Chen Changsheng was not an ordinary Ethereal Opening cultivator, and in order to kill Su Li, Liang Hongzhuang was even willing to accept

the shame. Of course, he did not mind being slightly more cautious, even though he did not need to be cautious at all.

For a Star Condensation expert to actually be so cautious against a clearly weaker opponent was a very terrifying matter. Looking at the red dancing dress that seemed like flames burning the mountain, Su Li raised his sword-like eyebrows again, but his expression became simpler. This was the simpleness of coldness and the simpleness of indifference, coldness to life and indifference to the outcome—he had already seen the outcome of the battle. Chen Changsheng's first strike was able to injure Liang Hongzhuang's earlobe, but he was unable to handle the current situation.

Hundreds of years ago, when he left the Garden of Zhou for the last time, he was already at the peak of Ethereal Opening. Even if it was him from that time facing the current Liang Hongzhuang, other than dying together, he would not have been able to come up with a better idea. So what could Chen Changsheng do?

Chen Changsheng did not know what to do. Even if his power of comprehension was higher, and he was even more hardworking in cultivation, the difference in level still existed. Not to mention, in the aspect of battle, Liang Hongzhuang's experience just exceeded him by too much, and... he arrived too quickly.

There were very few things more violent and faster than surging fire. He who was in the Ethereal Opening realm could not follow Liang Hongzhuang's speed at all, but he had two things that were even faster than Liang Hongzhuang—the Yeshi Step and the speed at which he thought.

With the use of spiritual sense, he could traverse numerous hills and streams.

He looked at the dancing dress that covered the wilderness and surged like fire, and thought hard as if his life depended on it.

Countless numbers and descriptions appeared in his sea of consciousness: the matters of the old imperial family that were recorded in the Daoist Canon, the features of Liang Wangsun's technique as he rampaged in the north, Liang Hongzhuang's cold gaze, his terrifying red sleeves, the Qi that rose suddenly and sharply, the boundless true essence, the angle that a blade of grass bent after it was stepped on. Afterwards, they constantly integrated with each other, matching up, forming an extremely complex star chart.

He had still not mastered the Intellectual Sword, and even with an additional three days and nights, it was impossible for him to find the weakness of Liang Hongzhuang's Star Domain through these, nor was he able to clearly see the connections on the star chart. Meanwhile, in the next moment, he was about to be burnt to ashes by Liang Hongzhuang's dancing dress.

He still could only make a wild guess, no, a guess.

Su Li had said that guessing and wild guessing were different. Guessing wildly was done with closed eyes, while guessing was done with the eyes open. He could see the world, see the starry sky, and using it to some extent, he would follow his intuition, or in

other words, the feelings of his heart.

He made his own guess, and then took advantage and moved first.

There was wind in the mountains originating from Liang Hongzhuang's dancing dress. However, it was eerily quiet around Chen Changsheng. Suddenly, he disappeared from where he was, and arrived before Liang Hongzhuang in the next moment.

He used the simplified version of the Yeshi Step.

An extremely vibrant sword ray glowed in the wilderness, and with a low hum, it brought the solemn and terrifying pressure that seemed to originate from the distant past, piercing through the flames that covered the mountain.

What he used was the new generation of the Dragoncry Sword.

Compared to the powerful domain in Liang Hongzhuang's floating dance dress, the sword intent was not strong, but it was especially dense.

The sword ray suddenly illuminated the wilderness, like a flash of lightning.

The dagger directly entered and then suddenly turned with an unimaginable angle. It traveled around the flames and arrived in front of Liang Hongzhuang.

A clear cry full of anger and shock resounded in the wilderness.

Liang Hongzhuang retreated hurriedly. Even though he was midair, the clear sword slash could be seen on his left shoulder. Fresh blood spilled out of the sword slash. Chen Changsheng's sword had actually hit him once again.

The power of the fire did not decrease, and instead rose sharply. Liang Hongzhuang was extremely mad, and the red dancing dress fell from the sky. It enveloped Chen Changsheng, and just at this moment, another extremely vibrant sword ray began to glow.

The sword resonated constantly in the wilderness. It was not rushed, coming in wave after wave, and even was rather slow. Also, the sword intent was not strong at all. However, the fiery dancing dress was unable to fall, unable to completely envelop Chen Changsheng.

Time flowed between the sword ray and dancing fire.

After an unknown amount of time, a terrifying ripping sound suddenly sounded in the wilderness.

The great flames that covered the entire area suddenly disappeared, and the sword ray no longer glowed.

The two people separated, gazing at each other over a distance of several dozen zhang. There was a light mountain breeze between

them.

Chen Changsheng's complexion was very pale, and his hand gripping the dagger constantly trembled.

Liang Hongzhuang's complexion was even paler, and he was covered in blood. His dancing dress had already been ripped to shreds.

Chen Changsheng had struck out seven times, and not even one strike failed to land.

At present, the outcome of the battle had already been decided.

The messy make-up and dripping blood on Liang Hongzhuang's pale face seemed extremely clear. Fresh blood constantly dripped from his destroyed dancing dress. He looked at Chen Changsheng, staring into his eyes. He did not seem to understand just exactly what had happened.

Chen Changsheng was rather at a loss. Even at this moment, he was also unclear on what had happened.

Su Li looked at Chen Changsheng and his emotions were rather complicated. In a battle between an Ethereal Opening teenager and a Star Condensation personage, the former won—the victory of surpassing cultivation realms that rarely happened in history just occurred before his eyes like this.

In the past, he had succeeded several times in surpassing cultivation realms and killing his opponent. He believed that Qiushan, who had studied the sword with him for a month, would also have been able to do it when he was in the upper level of Ethereal Opening. However, the fact that Chen Changsheng succeeded in this, and the method he had used, still made him feel great shock.

The battle was so ordinary.

Su Li knew well that exactly because of how ordinary it was, it was even more hair-raising.

Chen Changsheng succeeded in surpassing cultivation realms this time not because of innate talent, not because of a seemingly heavenly level in the path of the sword, not because of the gifts from the world and the stars, but all because of his own hard work and ability of comprehension. This was not talent, and in fact even far surpassed talent.

In the long river of time, in the vast continent, had there been someone like this before?

Su Li looked at Chen Changsheng and thought about this question silently. His finger tapped against the Yellow Paper Umbrella.

In the very end, he had only tapped six times.

# Chapter 377 - Wise Words After Alcohol

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Liang Hongzhuang stared at Su Li. Expressionlessly, he asked like a dead person, “Why?”

There was silence. No one was able to answer this question.

He made a bitter smile, “I thought that the heavenly laws would cycle in the end, not because of my revenge, just that the time had not yet come, even if it was slightly late, but there would always be one outcome in the end. Who would have thought there is no heavenly law? Why would it let someone like you always live so well? Seeing that you were about to die today, he appeared out of nowhere.”

Chen Changsheng lowered his head. He did not look at him, and his hand which grasped the dagger trembled slightly.

“Just how has our Liang clan offended you? What exact benefits has the Chen clan of Tianliang given you? A decade ago, you wanted to wipe out my Liang clan!”

Liang Hongzhuang’s laughter became louder and louder, the blood on his body flowed faster and faster and his voice became shriller and shriller. When he said this final sentence, his questioning became a roar, a roar produced by an injured beast. It was full of anger and unwillingness, despair and pain. It pierced into the deepest parts of the souls of those who heard it.

Chen Changsheng’s head lowered even more, his face became

even paler, and his hand trembled even more. It was as if he was unable to hold onto the hilt of the dagger in the next moment. He did not wish to see Liang Hongzhuang who seemed to already go crazy, and also did not dare to look at Su Li. This was because he was very worried that if he saw them, he would feel an unrestrainable feeling of guilt for what he had done, and sink into pain and struggle.

Hearing Liang Hongzhuang's grieving and indignant questioning and seeing Chen Changsheng who had his head lowered, Su Li remained expressionless—things that had already occurred could never be changed. Thus, whether one regretted it or not, it was all pointless, so there was no need to blame oneself. Even if there was regret, it could only happen in his own heart. He definitely would not fall to the level of explaining it to the world.

This was how he was. If it was the past, no matter how miserable Liang Hongzhuang was, he would leave without even a change in his expression. Today, he was also like that, without a change in his expression, but for some reason, he said a few words before leaving. Perhaps it was because Chen Changsheng's head hung too low, and that the dagger in his hand trembled too much?

“When your ancestors of the Liang clan were emperors, just how many people in the south did they kill, and how many sects did they exterminate?”

Su Li looked at Liang Hongzhuang expressionlessly and said, “As for wiping out your Liang clan... if I really wanted to do that, how would you be alive today, and how would Liang Wangsun still be alive?”

He suddenly felt rather annoyed. He looked at Chen Changsheng and said coldly, “Why are you standing there idiotically and not leaving? Imitating loneliness or are you filled with despair? Don’t think that just because you’ve saved me, you have the right to lecture me.”

After saying that, he walked towards the other side mountain.

After these days of resting, he was still heavily injured, but he could slowly walk slightly.

The two furry deer were full with the green grass and returned back towards them. They looked at Su Li who walked in the distance and Chen Changsheng who remained head-down. They seemed to be rather perplexed, not knowing who to follow.

Chen Changsheng raised his head and looked at Liang Hongzhuang. He wanted to say something, but only said a single word in the end, “Sorry.”

After saying this heavy word, his mood did not become more relaxed because of it. He extended his hand to pull the ropes around the necks of the two furry deer, and silently chased after the lonely person in the distance.

The side of the mountain faced south.

Liang Hongzhuang was no longer able to endure it anymore, and

collapsed on his bottom. He looked at the two people who gradually became closer together and yelled painfully, “You think you really can return to the south? If you continue to follow him, you will definitely die!”

Chen Changsheng did not turn around, and continued onwards with his head down silently.

Su Li walked very slowly, so it was not too long before Chen Changsheng caught up.

The fury deer lifted its front limb and placed its knee on the ground. He lifted Su Li onto its back.

From the start to the end, no one said anything.

Walking past the mountain and traversing another two mountains, the fury deer stopped by the side of a grassy hill that was green like moss.

Chen Changsheng got off the back of the deer and sprinted to the edge of the path. He bent over and began vomiting.

Su Li looked at him and sneered, “It’s not like that guy died. What is there to vomit over?”

Chen Changsheng waved his hand and wanted to explain a little. However, he was unable to suppress the uncomfortable feeling in his chest, and began vomiting again.

His battle with Liang Hongzhuang was his first upfront battle where he defeated a Star Condensation expert all by himself. If the battle was not overly ordinary which seemed to de-emphasize it, perhaps it was a battle that had a spot in history.

However, the price he paid was not ordinary. A battle that surpassed cultivation realms was obviously not as simple as it seemed. Under the pressure of Liang Hongzhuang's Star Domain, he had also suffered very heavy injuries. All of his bones seemed to want to crack. Back then when his body had been trembling nonstop, it was an issue with his mood, but also because his body really could not last anymore.

However, the true injury was not in the body, but in the mind.

He did not have talent in calculation like Xu Yourong, much less innate talent that was strong enough to surpass cultivation realms. He had only begun learning the Intellectual Sword, yet he forcefully used it against the opponent. Also, he used seven strikes, which was not something he could endure currently. Most of the collection and analysis of information, with complicated calculations that were vast and boundless like the ocean, or even the starry sky, directly squeezed all of his mental energy dry, shaking his sea of consciousness all the way until it was about to collapse.

He spent all his spiritual sense on those seven strikes, and his sea of consciousness was emptied.

The body of the cultivator was a boat in their sea of consciousness. Now that the sea of consciousness was dry, the boat constantly fell into the void, never stopping. This was a very terrifying process. He felt that all of his surroundings, the mountain and the grassy hill, were constantly spinning and changing. The brilliantly blue sky seemed to fall over his head, which made him feel extremely bothered, uncomfortable, dizzy, painful and weak. It was like drinking alcohol for seven days and seven nights without rest, with the alcohol being strong alcohol or even bad alcohol.

The feeling was extremely painful and extremely uncomfortable, and it was something at a mental level, unable to be expelled from his body no matter what.

He vomited all of the roast meat and wild fruit that he had eaten last night and in the morning. He also vomited his stomach acid, and in the end, he could only vomit things like water, until he could not vomit anything else. He did not stop, and began to vomit without anything, as if he wanted to vomit until seas dried and stones became soft, for all of eternity. Only like this could he express his feelings to the world.

Su Li looked at the teenager who vomited at the side of the path and said nothing.

After an unknown amount of time, he used the Yellow Paper Umbrella as a cane and slowly walked behind Chen Changsheng. He slowly raised the Yellow Paper Umbrella, and then hit the back of Chen Changsheng's neck.

With a slap, Chen Changsheng slowly collapsed. Before he collapsed, he used his last amount of energy to ensure that he would fall backwards and not be contaminated by the filth he had vomited up.

However, he did not faint. His eyes remained opened, and he looked at the sky. He was in extreme pain and was extremely weak.

Su Li said indifferently, “If you are unwilling to faint, you might go insane.”

The strike from before consumed all of the energy he had accumulated secretly in the past few days. Originally, he thought that perhaps it was not enough to kill opponents, but it should be enough to save someone. However, he did not think that the body of this teenager was actually so tough.

Chen Changsheng opened his mouth like a fish in agony and said weakly, “Senior, there’s a blade of grass on the mountain.”

“You can’t be wanted to write a poem before you die?” Su Li said, “Don’t be like this, it makes people uncomfortable.”

Chen Changsheng raised his hand with great difficult and pointed at the grass. He said, “That’s a Hundred Day Intoxication.”

Just like how Su Li had said, if he continued like this, it really was possible for his sea of consciousness to collapse, resulting in his death or directly turning him into an idiot. Also, most

importantly, he really was very uncomfortable and felt very painful right now. If he could still see clearly at this time, able to see the white clouds in the brilliant blue sky, he would definitely unwind the golden needle at the first moment, and make himself unconscious. However, he could not do it.

Fortunately, when he collapsed, he saw a grass that could make him unconscious.

Su Li understood what he intended, and picked the grass. He crushed the grass roughly with his hand, and then shoved it into Chen Changsheng's mouth.

Chen Changsheng finally closed his eyes. His face was still pale, and his eyelashes quivered slightly.

Su Li breathed a few times tiredly, and sat down cross-legged. He glanced at the silent mountain, and his right hand landed on the umbrella handle.

A while later, Chen Changsheng suddenly opened his eyes, and looked at the the sky absent-mindedly.

Su Li glanced down and said, “Unwilling to faint?”

Chen Changsheng said tiredly, “The effects aren’t that fast.”

Su Li said, “Then close your mouth, close your eyes and wait.”

Chen Changsheng said with difficulty, “But there are some things I want to say to Senior.”

Su Li stayed silent for a while and then said expressionlessly, “Go.”

“Senior... you should kill fewer people in the future.”

With that, Chen Changsheng finally felt that he had completed what he needed to do. He relaxed, closed his eyes and passed out.

# Chapter 378 - A New Sword Style

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As he watched the unconscious Chen Changsheng, Su Li raised his eyebrows in contemplation. This was because of those final words Chen Changsheng had said before falling unconscious, and because over the past few days, Chen Changsheng had said and done many things.

Over his hundreds of years of wandering the world, he had encountered many excellent youths. Amongst them, some of the youths were extremely talented, while others had exceptional willpower. Those youths which he most admired were all at the Mount Li Sword Sect.

However, he had never encountered a youth like Chen Changsheng.

He had always believed that youths had a manner that was unique to them, the so-called morning sun and dew, the newly-developed butterfly and the young chick; the aura of those youthful existences was clear and passionate. Chen Changsheng also had this sort of temperament, but it was much more tranquil and calm. This youth was also like a gust of spring wind, but it was the wind of the beginning of spring, very light, and thus clean and refreshing, causing others to feel carefree and relaxed.

Su Li watched the sleeping Chen Changsheng in silence, studiously observing him.

When an ordinary youth would wake up, they would often

intentionally lower their voice and feign a calm expression, thereby being lauded by their elders as mature and admired by their peers as calm. Moreover, while they slept, they would often return to an appearance appropriate for their true age, exposing their naive and innocent side. But Chen Changsheng was not like this. His appearance was that of a youth, pure and young like a tea garden before the rain, but his expression had the same sort of calmness that it had when he was awake, even.... actually somewhat sorrowful.

Why was it that even in a deep sleep, this youth's forehead was still creased so tightly? What was he thinking about? What was he worrying about? What was he anxious about? If he could not even escape from this pressure in his slumbering dreams, then why was it that when he was awake, he would always appear so calm and refuse to let others see the slightest hint of it?

Su Li could clearly tell that there was something wrong in Chen Changsheng's heart, but he did not want to ask about it, nor did he want to probe it out. It was not that he was not curious, but because there were even more important things that needed to be done. He lifted his head towards the boundless mountains and plains, his face expressionless and his pupils like stars. The coldness around him gradually grew denser, and while the hand gripping the handle of the Yellow Paper Umbrella seemed slightly more relaxed, it was actually positioned more suitably to pull out the sword.

The assassin called Liu Qing was, at this very moment, somewhere amidst these mountains and plains, probably keeping a close watch over this location. To an ordinary person, the third place on the Ranking of Assassins was absolutely a very frightening

existence. However, under normal circumstances, it would not even be enough for Su Li to lift his head and take a glance. It was just that these were not normal circumstances. Chen Changsheng was unconscious and he was heavily injured. No matter what angle it was viewed from, this was the assassin's best chance to strike, unless the assassin was resolved to continue carrying out the doctrine of conservatism.

Su Li suddenly felt somewhat nervous, causing the emotion on his face to grow increasingly indifferent. It had been many years since he was this nervous, because it had been many years since anybody was able to threaten his life. He thought that he had long since gained an understanding of life and death, but after Xue He and Liang Hongzhuang appeared, he finally understood that even if his sword heart was brightly lit, his mind could no longer keep it so brightly lit in the face of death. Or perhaps it was because he had just experienced a very challenging life-or-death ordeal.

Over his life, he had encountered many life-or-death ordeals, and won countless battles against powerful opponents he should not have been able to beat. Compared to those opponents, people like Xue He and Liang Hongzhuang did not even deserve to be mentioned. However, he clearly understood that over the course of his entire life, the moment in which he had been closest to death was not on that snowy plain outside Xuelao City, nor on the banks of that cold stream in the Longevity Sect, but a short time ago on that nameless mountain, in that instant when Liang Hongzhuang's dancing dress had attacked like fire.

The reason that was the closest he had ever been to death in his life was that Liang Hongzhuang would assuredly have killed him, because Liu Qing was definitely concealed close by. The most

important reason was that he had no means of taking his fate into his own hands.

Whether facing off against the Demon Lord's shadow and tens of thousands of demon soldiers outside Xuelao City, or confronting around a dozen Longevity Sect elders with unfathomable levels of cultivation on the banks of the cold stream, he had always had a sword in hand that he could brandish.

As long as a sword was in his hand, the world was Su Li's. Even if the god of death stood in front of him, he would not be afraid. But... in that previous moment, he could not do anything. He could only place his fate in the hands of that youth called Chen Changsheng.

Fortunately, this youth had proved that he was very worthy of his trust.

"This time, I really do owe you a life."

As he gazed at the youth's wrinkled forehead, Su Li shook his head.

The assassin continued to conceal himself in the wilderness. For some reason, he never chose to strike. Perhaps it was because Chen Changsheng's performance or status had made him fearful, or perhaps it was because Su Li's hand had never once left the Yellow Paper Umbrella.

With the arrival of dusk, Chen Changsheng finally woke up. His face was pale as snow, his eyes not as clear and bright as they usually were, like he was recovering from a hangover. Thankfully, it seemed like his sea of consciousness had finally calmed down, so it seemed like he was out of danger.

He looked at Su Li, but before he had time to say anything, Su Li emotionlessly asked, "Do you have anything you want to say?"

After a moment of silence, Chen Changsheng said, "On matters of the past, as a junior, I don't know the stories behind them, so it's not right for me to determine right or wrong. Perhaps Senior truly did not kill wrongly, but a son avenging his father's death is also not wrong. If everyone is not wrong, and yet goes killing back and forth, there must something wrong with this situation."

Su Li replied, "As expected, you're still lecturing."

Chen Changsheng said, "On the snowy plains, Senior was always saying that you weren't a good person, because you've killed too many people. From this, it can be seen that Senior also knows that killing too many people is not too good of a thing in the end, so why not change?"

Su Li creased his forehead, then gave a smile that was not a smile. "But when did I ever say that I wanted to be a good person? Since I don't plan to be a good person, why do I need to change? Why should I kill people less?"

Chen Changsheng was struck speechless. Finally, he helplessly

asked, "Senior, is there any need to compete over every matter, to dispute every little thing?"

"Courageously advancing, but not being able to express one's thoughts through words, not competing and not debating. what sort of way to live life is that?"

Su Li said this very calmly and serenely. Chen Changsheng fell into a long period of silence. From the moment he became self-aware, he had been reading books. After he found that his body was not healthy, he had thought about how to live a little longer. He felt that life was indeed the best thing about life, that living was the most beautiful thing. He had very rarely thought about which way to live could be considered living.

He thought and thought, then decided to no longer think about this question.

He understood that in the aspect of life, he was a rustic youngster who could not even eat to a full stomach, while a person like Su Li was a person who had feasted lavishly for many years. Now that he began to pursue lighter meals and take care of his health, he began to search for inheritance and spirit in his food. He had never been a person of the world, but this did not mean that he had some sort of conflict or resentment to the people of the world. On the contrary, he envied the people of the world. This was because the people of the world made up the vast majority of the people on this world. Living had originally been to live in that sort of manner. At the very least, it was more meaningful to live that way than the way some other people lived.

"The Mount Li disciple called Liang Xiaoxiao..."

The things that he had encountered in the Garden of Zhou, the matters that he was willing to talk about, had mostly been said to Su Li. He had also spoken of Liang Xiaoxiao, but it was only today that he finally filled Su Li in on the finer details of what had happened by the lake.

He thought that since the gate to the Garden of Zhou had once again opened, then as long as Qi Jian and Zhexiu were still alive, Liang Xiaoxiao would have definitely already been punished for his crimes. It was just after going through this battle with Liang Hongzhuang, he had become much more sensitive to the family name of 'Liang'. Thus, he explained everything so that Su Li could analyze it, but he had not imagined that Su Li's response would be so huge.

When he heard that Liang Xiaoxiao had stabbed through Qi Jian's abdomen, Su Li's face grew very dark, like a torrential rain was gradually forming around his face, like thunderbolts could stab out at any time.

At the end, Su Li declared, "He will die."

Chen Changsheng thought to himself, this is an affair for your Mount Li. In addition, he really should die. He could never have imagined that Liang Xiaoxiao had already died, and that he had used his death to leave behind a great deal of trouble.

Su Li already understood why Liang Xiaoxiao would join with the

demons. It was just that the matter involved the good name of Mount Li. Crucially, it involved that bloody affair more than ten years ago concerning the Longevity Sect and the north which he had caused, so he was unwilling to say too much to Chen Changsheng.

"In the end, how did you see through it?" He looked at Chen Changsheng and changed the subject.

This question was naturally asking about what method Chen Changsheng had used to break through Liang Hongzhuang's Star Domain. If the first strike was a guess, what about the following seven strikes? Blow after blow had struck true, so naturally it could not be a mere guess. Could it be that he actually finished learning the Intellectual Sword?

Chen Changsheng very carefully thought about his answer, confirming the circumstances at the time, then replied, "It really was a guess."

Of course, Su Li did not believe him, but Chen Changsheng's expression was one that said he was absolutely not lying. Most importantly, Chen Changsheng had no reason to deceive. And even more important than that was that there truly was no basis for Chen Changsheng to have learned the Intellectual Sword so quickly.

To guess which star amongst the vast sky of stars would move was already an inconceivable matter. To guess where the gap in the Star Domain of a Star Condensation cultivator would appear was even more unimaginable, let alone doing it seven times in a

row.

"If you really are relying on luck, then your luck is already so good that it exceeds luck."

Su Li looked at him and said, "You are a person with a lot of good karma."

Chen Changsheng did not understand, so he asked, "Good karma?"

"What is the most important thing for cultivation?"

"Willpower? Comprehension?"

Su Li shook his head. "No, it's luck. Every single expert that managed to dominate a region, the so-called Saints, all possessed extremely good luck, and so were able to escape many dangers. Of course, luck is only momentary, but good karma is for a lifetime, so they are all people that have a lot of good karma. That includes me."

Chen Changsheng thought about it, then asked, "How is good karma decided?"

"Of course, it's fate."

Su Li looked into his eyes and said, "So in other words, your fate

is really good."

Hearing these words, Chen Changsheng could not find any words to respond—from the moment he was born, he had felt that his fate was bad. Who could have thought that there was someone that told him his fate was actually very good? This made him feel somewhat ridiculous, somewhat comforted, and somewhat saddened.

As they continued their journey south, the two people and two deer finally drew close to Tianliang County. His education in the sword had also reached a new stage.

After experiencing that battle with Liang Hongzhuang, Chen Changsheng clearly understood where his weak points were.

The first was that he required an even more powerful spiritual sense and willpower. He finally understood why Su Li had said, “Only after experiencing it will you have the qualifications to understand using the Intellectual Sword requires sufficient strength.” This was because the Intellectual Sword required an even more extraordinary strength, or else the swordsman would find themselves simply incapable of bearing the massive amount of calculations. They might even fall unconscious before they even managed to take out their sword.

Secondly, to defeat a Star Condensation expert, he needed to increase his output. Only this way could he grasp those fleeting opportunities and deliver a heavy blow to his opponent. Only this way could he avoid the situation where he could land eight consecutive blows and still not be able to kill Liang Hongzhuang.

That sort of situation was very dangerous. If Liang Hongzhuang had been a little bit stronger, if he could have held on for a moment longer, Chen Changsheng would have collapsed from the shock to his sea of consciousness and he and Su Li would have undoubtedly died.

Thus, at twilight by a stream, Su Li began to teach him a second sword technique.

"The output of your true essence is too awful. It's just like a little kid wielding an embroidery needle. Even if you were faster and you pricked three-thousand-six-hundred holes on your opponent's body, you still wouldn't be able to poke him to death. So in the past few days, I've thought of a sword style."

Su Li gazed at Chen Changsheng in the waters of the stream. "Do you want to learn it?"

Chen Changsheng did not answer, because this question did not need an answer. Amongst all the people who used swords, there was no one that did not want to learn the sword from Su Li, let alone the fact that it was very obvious that this sword style had been especially developed by Su Li for him. And finally, at the moment, he was incredibly shocked.

Staring at the middle-aged man standing on the shore, Chen Changsheng opened his mouth, but he could not even make half a sound. According to these words, did that mean that Su Li realized that day that there was a problem with the output of his true essence, began to think about this problem, and designed a completely new sword style in just a few days? What was a true

genius? What was a master of the path of the sword? This was it.

Su Li acted like he hadn't even seen Chen Changsheng's appearance and continued to talk. He calmly introduced this newly developed sword style, and as for whether he felt somewhat proud inside, one could detect it a little from the way the ends of his brows perked upward.

This sword style was called the Blazing Sword. Although it only consisted of one move, it was more accurate to say that it was a method for moving the sword. If the Intellectual Sword could assist the swordsman in seeing through the weak points of a Star Condensation expert, the Blazing Sword would assist the swordsman in exploding forth with his sword energy and true essence. In a short time, one could obtain extraordinary benefits, and thus be more of a threat to Star Condensation opponents.

The two sword styles that Su Li had taught him were all very relevant, as if they were meant for helping upper level Ethereal Opening cultivators successfully surpass cultivation levels and kill Star Condensation opponents. Chen Changsheng had trouble with outputting true essence, so the Blazing Sword assisted him in solving this problem.

The catch was that if one wanted to solve a problem, a price had to be paid. The Intellectual Sword which had not even taken shape had almost turned Chen Changsheng into an idiot. This Blazing Sword that could solve his true essence output problems would require him to pay even more.

"Similar to the demons' Body Release Art, although you won't

die, you'll definitely be very miserable." Su Li continued, "As I said before, the sword styles I pass down to you are for protecting me until I return to Mount Li, not out of any good intentions for you. So learning or not learning is all on you."

Chen Changsheng walked out of the stream, the tree branch in his hand piercing through a fat and tender whitefish. As his bare feet stamped through the blazing sun reflected on the surface of the stream, he laughed, but didn't say anything.

Su Li teased, "So stubbornly honest and straightforward, not making a person happy in the slightest. He's far inferior compared to my family's Qiushan."

Chen Changsheng thought, Senior obviously wants to teach me this sword style, and yet he needs to find so many excuses. It's because he doesn't want there to be any feelings between us. That is what it means to be truly stubbornly honest and straightforward. Only it's actually rather interesting.

Su Li looked at him and said, "The sword energy comes from the Burning Heaven Sword, while the sword move comes from the Secrets of the Golden Crow Sword. However, the absolutely most crucial point is that in the instant that you ignite your true essence, I need your manner to be exactly in line with the imposing manner of the last move of the Mount Li Sword Style."

Chen Changsheng was just using his dagger to slice open the fish, but when he heard these words, he stopped and turned his head in shock. "The Mount Li Sword Style?"

"Correct, this is the Blazing Sword's most difficult point."

Su Li explained, "The Burning Heaven Sword increases the sword form, the sword move increases the radiance, and when the true essence explodes, you need a daring attitude that does not care for life."

Chen Changsheng was silent for a while, then said, "I understand."

Su Li stared into his eyes. "When you attack, you must have the resolve to die; do you really understand?"

Chen Changsheng lifted his head and said, "Senior, I've used that move before."

Su Li was very surprised. He stared silently into his eyes for a long time, then finally said, "How could this little guy completely not understand cherishing his own life? Remember, don't think that because your fate is so good, you can act wantonly."

Chen Changsheng answered, "Senior, you know that I'm not that sort of person."

Su Li lapsed into silence, then replied, "Right now, I really don't know... what sort of person a kid like you is."

# Chapter 379 - Blaze, My Sword (Part One)

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What Chen Changsheng said was not accurate. Back then, in the final moment of the battle in the Grand Examination, he was prepared to use the final move of the Mount Li Sword Style, but he never actually used it. However, the final move was about intention, and Gou Hanshi saw his intention, which was why he admitted defeat. As a result, if he said he had used the move, it could not be considered wrong.

Su Li understood very clearly what the final move of the Mount Li Sword Style meant, so he felt more and more like he did not understand the teenager. However, since Chen Changsheng knew the move and had used this move, the greatest difficulty of learning the Blazing Sword no longer existed.

The Blazing Sword was a sword move, and also a method of circulating true essence. It was a method he had created for Chen Changsheng from his observations of him in the past few days.

The amount of true essence a cultivator could output, or in other words, the efficiency, depended on the speed the cultivator could burn star radiance and the thickness of the meridians. This meant that there was a certain upper limit. The greater the innate talent, the better their aptitude, then the greater the speed of true essence output. The limit of the meridians for people with innate talent like Xu Yourong and Qiushan Jun could be ignored. As long as they had enough star radiance in their bodies, they could even output true essence forever.

Chen Changsheng had a lot of star radiance in his body. He had

no problem in the Meditative Introspection, but the greatest problem was the pathways for the true essence were overly thin, with many meridians that were even severed. As a result, his efficiency for true essence output was naturally extremely low.

As a great scholar of the path of the sword, Su Li's most impressive area was that his understanding of the world exceeded far beyond the categories that ordinary people knew. He solved problems in a very unexpected fashion, but it was actually the most reasonable and fair way.

He did not begin on Chen Changsheng's amount of true essence, and also did not attempt to solve the problems of his meridians. Instead, he used an utterly fearless method of directly placing the answer to the problem on the method of burning true essence.

Of course, the person who needed to take risks was Chen Changsheng, and the person who needed to be utterly fearless was still Chen Changsheng.

"There are many methods, or in other words, many forms of burning. Normally, it's about gentleness, transforming the star radiance into clear water and having it flow like droplets. Only like this can the thin stream of water flow for a long time. However, this sword requires you to burn your true essence in a much more violent way."

Su Li looked at him and said, "Just like countless pieces of wood shavings being trapped in a space. If a source of fire suddenly appeared, the wood shavings would immediately combust, giving off extremely great heat and power, like an explosion."

Chen Changsheng heard what he said, and imagined it in his sea of consciousness. He nodded his head.

Su Li said, “This method of exploding can help your true essence immediately increase to a certain level, breaking through the disordered meridians, and the power of the sword can be increased to a barely bearable level.”

“Understood,” Chen Changsheng said. “But what has this got to do with the final move?”

Su Li looked into his eyes and said, “Endless amounts of true essence will blaze in your body at the same time like an explosion. You may illuminate everything with your sword energy, dazzle your opponent, but there is an even greater possibility of blazing yourself into an idiot or being blown to pieces. If you don’t have the resolution of definitely dying, it would be impossible to take the final step at all.”

Chen Changsheng felt that there was a vague reaction from the spiritual soul of the Black Dragon in the dagger. He thought of the scene where he underwent Meditative Introspection in the cave under New North Bridge, and he could not help but feel slightly sorrowful. He thought that as it turned out, everything that happened had a reason.

Thinking of Su Li’s reaction when he had said he knew the last move of the Mount Li Sword Style, he held back and did not say it to Su Li that he had several similar experiences. Although he was

still young, his feelings towards life and death had already undergone great changes.

Su Li carefully explained the move and sword intent of the Blazing Sword. He did not say anything else afterwards. He let Chen Changsheng comprehend it himself, before looking at the mountains dyed in the color of the sunset and the grassy land on the opposite side of the stream. He said nothing.

It was possible for the assassin to appear on the grassy land at any moment.

Chen Changsheng did not hurry to comprehend the sword. He put some coarse salt on the chopped fish, and then hung them over the bonfire to roast. Since he had confirmed that the enemy was always there, the fire was not something worth concentrating over. With the light fragrance of roasting, he followed Su Li's gaze and looked at the grassy area opposite of the stream, before shaking his head afterwards. He thought that the assassin really was extremely patient, actually doing nothing even after so many days. Maybe Zhexiu could do something similar, but he definitely could not.

To Su Li and him, the assassin that always hid in the wilderness was an extremely great pressure. The two knew very well that at a certain moment, the assassin would definitely appear. It was just that they did not know when.

“Just like what Senior said, if you keep waiting like this, even if you wait till death, you will not receive any opportunities.”

Chen Changsheng said in his heart to the famous assassin who never appeared in the end, “Because Senior is teaching me how to use the sword. I will become stronger and stronger, and when it is time, you will be unable to kill me.”

Fat, tender whitefish with sorghum rice. After the very simple but delicious dinner, Su Li leaned on the fury deer with his eyes closed, resting. Chen Changsheng tidied up everything before walking to the side of the stream. He sat down and began to properly comprehend the sword.

He looked at the grassy area opposite of the small stream and thought about the vast snowy plains in his body. The snow was the star radiance he had collected day and night, the initial form of true essence. It was the origin of all battle power.

Right now, he only needed the slightest movement of his spiritual sense and he could burn the entire snowy plains and even the lake water that surrounded the Spirit Mountain above the plains, turning it into endless amount of energy and mental power. However, the sword did not ask for him to do that, because the method of burning it was still too soft. It was not violent enough, and the rate at which star radiance turned into true essence was too slow.

The Blazing Sword was about the word ‘blaze’.

It needed to be a burning that was violent, resolute, and would burn the body like a flame.

Chen Changsheng sat by the stream. He said nothing. He looked as the color of dusk disappeared, looked as the stars filled his eyes, all the way until the arrival of dawn.

He used the time of an entire night to finally learn how to have his spiritual sense land on the snowy plains but not ignite the snow. Instead, he would use a shapeless power to loosen the snow, all the way until it left the ground and floated in the air again.

With the arrival of dawn, a red color dyed the wilderness and turned the stream completely red.

Looking at the grassy area that seemed like it was burning on the opposite side of the stream, Chen Changsheng's hand slowly left the dagger hilt.

On the third day since he began learning the Blazing Sword, in a tea house by the main road, Chen Changsheng and Su Li met their third assassin in their journey to the south. The assassin was called Lin Pingyuan, a tyrant of the north, who had killed countless people with his hands. Apparently, the person had some secret, unclear connections with the bearman tribe that relied on the demons. Perhaps because of this, he determined the path which Su Li took towards the south more soundly than other people, and waited for them to arrive there.

Because the matter was overly important, and also because it was overly hurried, the northern tyrant Lin Pingyuan only brought a dozen or so of his most loyal subordinates. However, in the small

tea house, it already seemed to be rather full.

The tea house had no customers and had a faint smell of blood. The stove to warm the tea was already cold and seemed like it had not been used for several days. The owner should have been already dead, with his corpse buried somewhere.

Chen Changsheng sat by the table and looked at the bowl of tea that had a weird smell. He said nothing, as he was thinking of something.

“Congratulations.” Su Li looked at Chen Changsheng and said, “I believe you will not have too many psychological burdens in killing this person.”

# Chapter 380 - Blaze, My Sword (Part Two)

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As a northern tyrant, Lin Pingyuan naturally carried a tyrannical spirit. Even though it was late spring, he wore a great fur cloak. Even though he was someone who had come to kill Su Li, he had even brought a dozen or so of his subordinates, not worrying about information being divulged at all.

“What is a tyrant? A great bully? A bully can only rampage in the villages. A tyrant who can rampage in the entire northern lands should be called a formidable and ruthless person. I thought that I was a formidable and ruthless person.” He looked at Su Li and said, “But a formidable and ruthless person must be shameless. I will not be as stupid as Liang Hongzhuang. I’ve brought my most trusted subordinates and a resolution to kill. I will definitely not be fair, and I will attack from all sides if I need to. If I can put thirty different kinds of poisons in your tea, there will not be a single type lacking. I will dig a pitfall trap as deep as I can.”

If it was normal times, Su Li would not even pay attention to someone like this. However, for some reason today, he instead seemed rather interested and said, “I feel that you’ve brought fewer people.”

Lin Pingyuan laughed, “If Senior was not heavily injured by the demon experts who attacked you from all sides, even if I brought all three thousand people, we would still not be the opponent of a single strike of your sword. But now that Senior is a tiger who has left the mountains and come to the plains, I only need to bring a dozen or so people. Also, the matter today needs to be secret, so it won’t be suitable to bring too many people. If I let the immortals in the Mount Li Sword Sect know I’ve killed you, would I still be

able to live?”

Su Li smiled, “Since you’re scared, you’re still willing to kill me?”

Lin Pingyuan said, “The price the others offered is just too great, so I couldn’t help but be tempted and give it a try.”

Su Li sighed with emotion, “No wonder you are a tyrant of the north, no, a formidable and ruthless person of the north. According to how formidable and ruthless people act, after you kill me, you will definitely silence your subordinates.”

Lin Pingyuan boldly waved his hand and said, “Senior doesn’t need to provoke me. These people have committed all sorts of crimes. We may not trust any other person, but we trust each other very much.

Su Li smiled and turned around. He said to Chen Changsheng, “Look, he said it himself that they’ve done all sorts of crimes.”

Chen Changsheng stared at the marks of blood that may have been old or new. After hearing what Su Li said, he gave an interjection of agreement.

Lin Pingyuan looked at him, and a sliver of doubt appeared in his eyes, “Who is this teenager? Perhaps he is a disciple of the Mount Li Sword Sect? Then that might mean I can only invite you to die too.”

Chen Changsheng ignored him and continued to stare at the marks of blood on the floor of the tea house. Although it was not bustling, the tea house still was on the side of the main road, and there was definitely many travelers who passed by every day. Looking at the marks of blood, many people should have already died here in the past few days. The owner of the tea house was definitely dead, but just how many innocent travelers had also died?

There was a breeze from the hill outside the tea house. Outside the window, there was a series of buzzing sounds. He lifted his head up and only saw a densely packed flock of mosquitoes and flies fly about, which he found to be rather disgusting. Although it was late spring, the northern lands were not warm, so where did so many mosquitoes and flies come from? The insects fell again, leaving Chen Changsheng's gaze and landing in the gutter underneath the window.

There were many corpses piled on top of each other, and the scene was too horrible to endure.

Su Li's congratulations to him were very reasonable.

The northern tyrant called Lin Pingyuan and the people in the tea house all could be killed.

Xue He came to kill Su Li for the empire, Liang Hongzhuang came to kill Su Li for revenge, but these people came to kill Su Li for profit. They had committed all sorts of crimes, so there was no reason for them to be alive.

Lin Pingyuan stood up where he was and said, “The pitfall couldn’t trap your fury deer, and it seems like the poison in the tea is useless. However, you still walked into this tea house, so I want to know if you can stand against so many of us.”

There were many people in the tea house, and the people were very strong. They had all undergone purification, with four in the Meditation realm and another actually in the Ethereal Opening realm. As for Lin Pingyuan himself, he was an expert at the Star Condensation realm. Chen Changsheng could not use the Intellectual Sword, because even if he could see the weakness of Lin Pingyuan’s Star Domain and defeat him, he would fall unconscious like last time, so what would he do about the other people?

Fortunately, he had just learned a new sword move and could try it out.

Sounds of ‘kill’ suddenly exploded in the tea house. Lin Pingyuan did not care about his so-called tyrant or bully prestige, and commanded his subordinates to kill. Meanwhile, he himself stood behind the group to hold the line, ready to act whenever.

Chen Changsheng stood up and raised his head. His gaze passed through the people with fierce expressions and landed on Lin Pingyuan’s body.

With a clank, the Dragoncry Dagger exited the sheath.

Sword Qi flooded the interior of the tea house. Violent winds arose, and all the tables and chairs were broken into pieces.

A scorching hot Qi enveloped the entire tea house, and a bright ray of light surged from the dagger.

The attacking subordinates saw a blazing dagger. Atop the blazing dagger, countless Golden Crows from the legends seemed to fly out.

With only a moment, the temperature of the room increased rapidly, becoming extremely torrid.

The bloody marks on the ground of the tea house, whether new or old, were all purified.

Light and heat surged from atop the dagger, representing an extremely boundless true essence.

In the group of people, there were consecutive miserable yelps of shock and pain. These yelps were all very short.

Behind his subordinates, Lin Pingyuan's expression suddenly changed, and became extremely serious.

Chen Changsheng used the Yeshi Step. He suddenly disappeared into nothingness and passed through those bodies that were falling and disintegrating. He arrived in front of Lin Pingyuan and thrust his dagger forwards.

The blazing true essence, the sword move of the Golden Crow, the sword energy of the Burning Heaven Sword and the resoluteness of the final move of the Mount Li Sword Style were all combined into this one strike.

Blazing Sword.

A sword that blazed.

The interior of the tea house became even brighter, as if the Golden Crows that had flown out from above the sword combined together, turning into a sun.

The sun was so dazzling that even Su Li was unable to see what happened inside clearly.

After some time, the wind in the tea house stopped, and the light slowly disappeared.

Chen Changsheng held the dagger in his hand and slowly withdrew it, as if he was withdrawing the torch that burnt the heavens.

With a swish, an extremely deep, bloody hole appeared between Lin Pingyuan's eyebrows.

There were dead people everywhere in the tea house.

Lin Pingyuan also was about to die.

He stared, looking at Chen Changsheng. His face was filled with disbelief and asked, “Just how are you able to kill me?”

He was an expert in the Star Condensation realm, a tyrant of the northern lands, a formidable and ruthless person that committed all sorts of crime. Just why was he killed by an Ethereal Opening teenager?

“Because you deserve to die,” Chen Changsheng said.

Lin Pingyuan did not understand, and did not need to understand because he was already dead.

He collapsed on the ground, and the remaining sword intent chopped down, turning him into a dozen or so pieces of flesh.

There were no more people in the tea house who could stand, other than Chen Changsheng. The tables and chairs in the tea house were already in pieces. Everything was in pieces. Only the chair under Su Li and the teapot in his hand remained intact.

The tea in the teapot contained a deadly poison, so no one knew why he had lifted the teapot.

Chen Changsheng walked in front of him.

Su Li lifted the teapot, and slowly poured the cold tea onto his body. There was only a hissing sound. As the cold tea came in contact with Chen Changsheng's face and body, it immediately turned into steam.

Because of the ignition of true essence, Chen Changsheng's entire body was burning hot. At this moment, it had only decreased slightly in temperature, and his face remained red. There were still remaining, violent embers in his eyes, so he seemed rather scary.

“This sword is too violent... I still can't withstand it.”

With that, Chen Changsheng collapsed without any signs, just like how he was after defeating Liang Hongzhuang and crossing the mountains.

“Fainted again?”

Su Li looked at him who was on the floor and said angrily, “What if that person comes? Hurry up and wake up.”

Chen Changsheng was already unconscious, so he naturally was unable to answer this question.

In the tea house, there were dead people everywhere, and pieces of flesh everywhere. It was a tragic sight, and the smell of blood attacked at the nose.

Su Li calmed down and slowly closed his eyes. At an unknown time, he had already grasped the handle of the Yellow Paper Umbrella.

Time passed slowly.

The mosquitoes and flies outside the window entered inside.

Whether kind, evil, virtuous or stupid, death was the same to gods and insects.

Su Li opened his eyes and said without an expression, “Get up, looks like he won’t appear.”

Other than the dead people, there was only the unconscious Chen Changsheng in the tea house, so who else could he be speaking to?

Chen Changsheng opened his eyes and, with some difficulty, stood up. He supported Su Li and left the tea house. He summoned the furry deer in the distance and continued their journey to the south.

A while later, a person suddenly climbed out from the pile of corpses in the tea house. The person walked onto the main pathway and looked at the figures of the people and deer in the south. He said nothing, before disappearing once again.

# Chapter 381 - The Spring Radiance Of Xunyang City

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Continuing south, they met another three waves of assassins. Chen Changsheng continued to kill before collapsing. It repeated like this for just a few times, but every time was extremely dangerous. In the process, the assassin Liu Qing who always hid in the wilderness never appeared, even to the point where Chen Changsheng sometimes suspected whether they had shaken off the assassin or not.

Although they had already met six assassination attempts, compared to the different forces that were currently searching for them in the surroundings of the Tianliang County, it was already the best outcome. Su Li grasped the situation very well, and also knew very clearly as to where the people that wanted to kill him would appear. He knew even better on how to handle the situation, but just where did this skill come from?

The choices of the route were all arranged by Su Li. They never went to places with a lot of people, but it did not mean that they always traveled in the wilderness. Most of the time, they disguised themselves as ordinary travelers, traveling south with the ordinary people on the road. Chen Changsheng admired his arrangements more and more, and began to feel puzzled. One day, when he finally could not hold back his question, he asked why it was like this. Su Li said, “It’s difficult to hide people in the world, but the best place to hide people is amongst people, so traveling with people is the safest, and also the most dangerous. The outcome between the two relies on how devoted you are to it.”

Chen Changsheng also asked, just what did the heart in ‘relies on how devoted you are to it’ refer to, and how to make the judgment. Su Li thought about it and replied with, “Just wait for you to kill as many people as me, and have had as many people try to kill you, and you will naturally develop this ability.” Chen Changsheng thought about it and said that if he needed to be like that to learn it, it was better to not learn it at all.

Regarding the stories and skills for an assassin in the night, Chen Changsheng could not learn it even if he wanted to. He was obviously rather lacking in talent in this area, but his talent in the aspect of the sword began to show its edge with Su Li’s teachings. His grasp of the Intellectual Sword became greater and greater, it was just that his spiritual world could not support it. His use and control of the Blazing Sword became better and better, but he was obviously still unable to avoid the great price paid for the blazing true essence. However, there were another two Star Condensation experts who were felled by his sword.

With this, he had already succeeded in surpassing cultivation realms five times in total. Also, the five times occurred one after another. His opponents included Xue He, a Divine General expert whose name had been renowned long ago, and a tyrant of the north like Lin Pingyuan.

Right now, he was still a teenager who was not even sixteen.

No one knew whether something like this had occurred in the history of the cultivation world, nor did they know if it was going to occur again. However, at least in the several centuries after Su Li had left the mountain, something like this had never happened.

Even he himself could not do it. Of course, this did not mean that Chen Changsheng was stronger than Su Li back then, because there were many specific differences. These differences included how Su Li placed most of his efforts on the Garden of Zhou back then, and that he did not have the chance to undergo so many life-or-death battles with Star Condensation experts one after another. However, Chen Changsheng's performance was already strong enough, strong to the point where Su Li was emotionally moved, and then felt moved in his heart.

One night, Su Li began to teach Chen Changsheng the third sword style. Chen Changsheng only used the time it took to heat the cold meat soup from the night before to memorize it. Su Li looked at him and sighed emotionally, “You really are suited to learning the sword.”

Chen Changsheng found it rather embarrassing and said, “Senior is flattering me.”

To be suited to learning the sword. This was an extremely high level of praise, let alone the fact that it came out of Su Li’s mouth.

Su Li looked at him and said, “If I didn’t have Qiushan and... to inherit my legacy, perhaps I really would have chosen you.”

Chen Changsheng clasped his hand, “No need, no need, Junior is the successor of the old school of the Orthodoxy, unable to accept a different master.”

Su Li understood Chen Changsheng’s personality. Declining was

inevitable and right, just that he declined so fast, without even the slightest hesitation from showing fake sincerity. It still made him rather uncomfortable.

As a result, he analyzed the six battles that Chen Changsheng had fought. He used detailed and accurate numbers and calculations, before finally coming up with a conclusion, “You are just lucky, otherwise you would be dead long ago. What right do you have to be pleased with yourself?”

Chen Changsheng thought about it and could not help but admit that this was so. The most important reason as to why he and Su Li could survive until now was not because of Su Li’s insight, the techniques Su Li had taught or his talent in the path of the sword, but rather luck... along the way, Su Li had already praised his luck, or in other words, his good karma, several times. He said with certainty that since both Chen Changsheng and he were people of great karma, if they traveled together, it would have been difficult to even think about death. He had become slightly numb from how many times that Su Li had said this, and during this time, Chen Changsheng had even already begun to accept that his fate was very good. It just was that he thought how his fate was really was not good at all, which often made him feel great perplexity.

After eating the leftover meat soup from the night before, Chen Changsheng pulled his clothes tightly, and rubbed his cheeks that were pale because he was frail. He began to quietly comprehend the third sword that Su Li had taught him, unwilling to waste even a bit of time. Su Li leaned on the back of the furry deer, looked at the teenager and said nothing for a very long time, before looking to the south and thinking silently.

“Qiushan, a pretty good guy appeared behind you. You must run a little faster, otherwise, you really will be caught up by him.”

The flight through the wilderness and main road finally ended. The two of them had arrived outside Xunyang City. Chen Changsheng gifted the two fury deer to a farmer outside the city and took out silver taels and the dagger. He threatened and bribed the farmer to not reveal any information, and to properly look after the two fury deer. Su Li looked at the scene with a face of ridicule, but he did not say anything.

Xunyang City was the first major city in the north of Tianliang County. The city was bustling and very lively. Su Li and Chen Changsheng disguised themselves as ordinary travelers and snuck into the city soundlessly. They found an inn to live in, and actually were not discovered by anyone. This was the first time Chen Changsheng had slept in a bed after entering the Garden of Zhou. He laid his head on the pillow and began to snore, just like how Su Li slept soundly in the hot springs of the snowy mountain range. He slept for an entire day and night. From this, it could be seen just how great of a mental pressure he was under during the journey, and just how exhausted he had become.

After waking up, Chen Changsheng walked to the window. He looked at the lively street of Xunyang City without saying a word for a very long time, and felt that they could not continue like this, because he really was very tired, very weak—he did not want to continue the journey, and then wait for the assassins and experts to appear wave after wave. He disliked waiting for the unknown, and disliked the feeling. He found Su Li and said, “There have been a lot of people who have come to the Tianliang County. I believe the people of the Mount Li Sword Sect would have already received

the news, and since it's like that, why are we still concealing our tracks?"

Su Li said, "I said, I only trust myself."

Chen Changsheng said nothing.

On the journey, he saw very clearly that on the surface, Su Li was a very unorganized, or even sometimes loveable Senior, an able person. However, he was actually just like his name, very detached from the world. Su Li did not believe in human nature, did not believe in the will of the people and did not believe in his world. He did not communicate with the world, so he would never ask the world for help.

He had already traveled by himself for centuries.

However, Chen Changsheng did not want to travel like this. He always believed that if he was kind to the world, the world would be kind to him. When he saw the green mountains to be charming, the green mountains would also find him pleasing to look at.

"If we continue like this, we will suffer great losses. All the people we meet will be enemies, without a single helper at all."

"Where are the helpers?"

"The world is formed from the dark night and the daytime. In the days before, we always traveled in the dark night, so all we saw

was the color of the night, and all we met was darkness. However, if we walked under the sun, perhaps we can see sunlight.” Chen Changsheng looked at Su Li and said very seriously, “Why is Senior unwilling to try it?”

Su Li said, “Where did you find this rotten poetic act? I don’t want to use my life to go prove that you’re wrong.”

Chen Changsheng said, “But I really want to prove that Senior is wrong.”

Su Li raised his eyebrows and said while looking at him, “Don’t even think of acting unruly.”

Chen Changsheng asked, “What is acting unruly?”

Su Li was very angry and said, “I know what you’re up to, brat. Don’t forget that this is my life, and my life belongs to me and not the heavens, let alone you!”

“But... isn’t it because of my hard work that Senior is able to live until now?”

Chen Changsheng looked at him earnestly with bright eyes. He seemed very cute, but in Su Li’s eyes, he seemed very repulsive.

Su Li felt his hand go slightly cold, and yelled with a suppressed voice, “You crazy bastard, I...”

Before he had even finished, Chen Changsheng directly walked to the window and used his two hands to push open the window.

In the Xunyang City of late spring, it was filled with noises, and the spring sun shone brightly.

As the window was pushed open, sunlight and the spring breeze flowed into the room, illuminating the gloomy, dark night.

A yell that was clear and bright like the spring radiance resounded in the street of Xunyang City.

“The Junior Martial Uncle of Mount Li, Su Li, is here!”

# Chapter 382 - There Are Troubles Everywhere In The World

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The street below the inn grew absolutely silent. The passersby and traders looked up at Chen Changsheng, some people beginning to murmur in amazement, and then they heard his second sentence.

"I am Chen Changsheng. Su Li is in the room behind me. Whether you want to save him or kill him, all the people that want to come should hurry over."

Just like his previous words, these words also fluttered about in Xunyang City which basked in the lovely spring sunlight. They fluttered swiftly and far. Presumably, they would very quickly pass out of the city walls and flutter to every corner of the continent. Countless gazes landed on the inn's window, resting on Chen Changsheng's face. Silence once again settled over this street in Xunyang City, persisting for a while before finally being shattered by a tumultuous din, welcoming a scene of complete turmoil.

There was the sound of a porcelain bowl shattering on the ground into eighteen pieces, the sound of a window being roughly closed, and the sound of sobbing cries. There were the puzzled questions of a child, the scolding and chiding of the father and mother, the stomping of horse hooves as they rushed off into the distance, and even the distant vibrations of the city gate closing.

With just a moment's effort, the pedestrians and merchants on the street had all vanished. The long street became absolutely deserted, leaving behind only the wrapper of a doughcake floating

on the street, as well as several strands of smoke that had come from the distant city gate. In a flash, it seemed like Xunyang City had become a vacant city—not all empty cities were planned to be that way. Sometimes, an empty city meant a dead city or a soon-to-be-dead city.

Chen Changsheng stood by the window, gazing at the still and lifeless street, hearing the gradually retreating and gradually disappearing sounds of human activity, seeing in the cracks of tightly closed doors those eyes that timidly peeked out. He was stunned and speechless. He did not understand. He had just yelled out that Su Li was here, so why had it brought about such a massive reaction? He could feel very faintly that he might have done something wrong, or perhaps had underestimated this matter.

In late spring, the wind that wound its way through the streets of Xunyang City possessed its own small warmth. However, now that the stoves on the side of the road had been extinguished and all signs of human life had disappeared, the wind grew somewhat chillier. Chen Changsheng subconsciously shut the window again. When he turned his head, he saw Su Li sitting on the chair. Somewhat helplessly and somewhat mockingly, Su Li asked, "Afraid now?"

Chen Changsheng's voice was somewhat tense. "It's just a bet."

At some point, Su Li's left hand had taken hold of the Yellow Paper Umbrella, his right hand gently tapping against the armrest of the chair. Looking into Chen Changsheng's eyes, he said, "Then I can already tell you... you lost your bet."

‘Su Li is here.’ With unimaginable speed, these four words spread to every nook and cranny of Xunyang City. Not even the Great Zhou army’s fastest Red Falcons and Red Geese could intercept this news. A deathly stillness hung over Xunyang City, but behind this deathly stillness was true chaos. Who knew how many bowls and plates in the houses of ordinary people met with disaster? Who knew how many people had sprained their ankles?

The place where the atmosphere was most tense was obviously the inn in which Su Li and Chen Changsheng resided. At the same time, this inn was the source of all the chaos. The customers who had been eating ran off as fast as they could, while amongst the visitors that had been staying in the inn, many of them had not even had time to bring their luggage with them. As the stream of guests faded away, even the owner and the waiters of the inn had taken the chance to furtively take their leave.

At the moment, the inn was silent and noiseless. There were overturned chairs and tables everywhere, making for a very disorderly scene. Only on the counter against the wall did someone remain. An accountant stood there. The accountant’s eyebrows were drooped, and he seemed rather poverty-stricken. He wore a long gown that had been washed extremely clean, and yet this made him seem even more poverty-stricken. Perhaps because he was poor, he seemed to hate his work, and yet even now, he had not left the inn. He continued to stand behind the counter, moving around his abacus and calculating the accounts.

The news had gotten out, so very naturally, people began coming, one after the other. What made Chen Changsheng somewhat happy was that the very first person to come was

someone from the Orthodoxy.

The bishop of Xunyang City was the Orthodoxy's northernmost bishop on the continent. His status was extremely high and his authority extremely weighty. The current bishop appointed to Xunyang City was called Hua Jiefu, and he was the Pope's most trusted aide. For this reason, Xunyang City was a greatly revered location in Tianliang County. Whether it was the lord of Xunyang City or that prince's palace, he rarely ever had to personally pay a visit. However, today, he absolutely had to personally come to this inn. Moreover, the attitude he displayed made all of Xunyang City feel that it was somewhat ill-fitting.

Hua Jiefu did not allow the dozens of priests attending him to enter the inn. He stood in front of the stone steps and tidied his scarlet garments, then walked into the inn alone. He seemed rather low-key, even faintly humble. If Su Li were not so heavily injured, with his life running out, then this respect would naturally have been for him. However, today, this respect was for Chen Changsheng.

Chen Changsheng was the current Principal of the Orthodox Academy. Using Archbishop Mei Lisha's words, within the Orthodoxy, besides the Pope, he did not need to bow to any person. Other people should be bowing to him. It was just that when an honorable cardinal was respectfully bowing to him, he still felt that he was not used to it, and so he subconsciously inclined his body a little.

Hua Jiefu straightened his body, and without even glancing at the shut door beside him, said to Chen Changsheng, "We just

recently learned of the news that Your Eminence was still alive, but we could not confirm it. For me to see Your Eminence today is truly a joyous occasion. I believe that once this news is brought back to the capital, His Holiness will also be very delighted. Countless people in the capital will raise up their heads in anticipation for Your Eminence's return."

Without even finishing his words, he had already spoken straightforwardly enough. The bishop had gotten straight to the point and invited Chen Changsheng to leave Xunyang City. If Chen Changsheng agreed, the Cathedral of Xunyang City would undoubtedly send a powerful escort, and even Hua Jiefu himself would take part.

Chen Changsheng turned to the closed door and silently thought for a few moments, then said, "You know that right now, I have a little trouble on my hands."

"I admit that this sir is truly an extremely large trouble, perhaps even the greatest trouble that has been seen in the past several centuries." Hua Jiefu glanced at the door, and then continued, "But this is not Your Eminence's trouble, nor is it the Orthodoxy's trouble. If Your Eminence insists on staying in the inn, this trouble will only get larger and larger, until it becomes so large that even I will not be able to resolve it."

Chen Changsheng asked, "Those... troubles—when will they appear?"

Hua Jiefu replied, "Very quickly. In addition, news has come from the capital that a person from the Scholartree Manor has

most likely come north. At the moment, we cannot confirm their identity, but we can definitely confirm that it is very troubling."

After a moment of silence, Chen Changsheng asked, "Can I not bring Sir Su Li back with me to the capital?"

Hua Jiefu did not need to think about it, directly answering, "The Li Palace did not mention it."

Chen Changsheng once again fell silent, understanding his meaning. From the time they had encountered those first two assassins and Xue He until now, quite some time had passed. The Li Palace had most certainly found out that Su Li was with him, but they had ordered their subordinate churches to escort Chen Changsheng back to the capital. That they did not mention a word about Su Li already indicated the Li Palace's position.

"I might have to wait in this inn a little longer."

"We can definitely safeguard Your Eminence, but we have no means of protecting that sir in that room because Your Eminence wants to protect that sir. Your Eminence should understand that is not fair."

"Yes."

Chen Changsheng looked at Hua Jiefu and declared, "So you can pretend that you don't know that I am in Xunyang City."

Hua Jiefu replied, "But Your Eminence is in Xunyang City, and how long does Your Eminence plan to stay? Every person must solve their own troubles in the end, not even speaking of the fact that the sir within is himself a trouble."

Chen Changsheng pondered the question, then replied, "I want to wait until someone from the Mount Li Sword Sect arrives, or... someone he trusts, that has the ability to protect him, comes."

Hua Jiefu sighed regretfully, "The entire world knows that Su Li has never trusted anyone... he has no friends, not a single one. Your Eminence wants to wait until such a person appears—how long will that be?"

"Perhaps...but I always feel that there should be people willing to help him."

With these words, Chen Changsheng turned around and walked into the room.

Hua Jiefu suddenly began to say something behind him. "Your Eminence probably does not know... something happened outside the Garden of Zhou, and Your Eminence really must return as quickly as possible to the capital to resolve it."

Chen Changsheng stopped and asked, "What happened?"

Hua Jiefu replied, "Liang Xiaoxiao died."

Chen Changsheng did not think that he would hear this sort of news. After staring blankly for a few moments, he asked, "He was a spy of the demons—who killed him?"

Hua Jiefu's expression grew somewhat complex. "He said that Your Eminence killed him."

Chen Changsheng was incredibly shocked. "He said I killed him?"

"Yes, although he did not make himself clear before his death, everyone there understood his meaning." Hua Jiefu looked into his eyes and said, "He died under the final move of the Mount Li Sword Style. In the Garden of Zhou, only Qi Jian and Your Eminence know this move."

Chen Changsheng was at a loss, unable to make heads or tails of what was going on.

Finally, Hua Jiefu said, "Liang Xiaoxiao said that Your Eminence and Zhexiu were spies for the demons. Zhexiu... has already been put in Zhou's prison."

Hearing these words, Chen Changsheng was quiet for a very long time. He knew that he had to return to the capital as soon as possible, but how could he leave? He looked at the closed door and felt that it truly was very troublesome.

# Chapter 383 - Straightforward Liang Wangsun

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Chen Changsheng pushed open the door to the room and walked in front of the chair. He explained everything he had heard before to Su Li, without leaving out the slightest detail.

Su Li gently tapped the armrest of the chair. He stayed silent for a little while before laughing, “There are troubles everywhere in the world, and what we do is to solve these questions. Your trouble is actually not too troublesome. Although Liang Xiaoxiao’s scheme is indeed very beautiful, you only need to return to the capital to solve it. If I can return to Mount Li, of course it will be even easier to solve.”

Chen Changsheng understood what he meant. If Liang Xiaoxiao’s death was because he wanted to use his life to do this, the trouble would indeed be very hard to solve. However, he was currently a popular person of the Orthodoxy after all, and as long as the Pope continued to believe him, this trouble would not be big. As for the aspect of the Mount Li Sword Sect, as long as Su Li could return to Mount Li alive and casually say a word on it, who would dare to doubt it?

What Su Li said seemed simple, but it was actually not very simple at all. He had combined the two troubles together, solving one of the greatest troubles Chen Changsheng was currently facing. Chen Changsheng did not need to make another choice, and only needed to maintain his previous notion.

“Afterwards, many troubles will appear in Xunyang City. I seem

to have underestimated... the importance of this. The Orthodoxy is unwilling to act, and I have no way of solving these troubles. You have said correctly, it seems that I have lost the bet." Chen Changsheng walked to the side of the table. He lifted up the tea cup and took a sip, moistening his somewhat dry throat.

Su Li raised his eyebrows even higher. His smile became even wider and he said, "Of course you've lost, but you yelling aloud still has some benefits. At least you helped me solve my greatest trouble."

Chen Changsheng placed down the tea cup. He was rather confused, and thought, just what did I do?

"You destroyed the secret of our journey with your yell. Everyone on the continent is looking at Xunyang City. Old man Yin still wants some dignity in the end, so at least he won't get the younger members of the Orthodoxy to come kill me in broad daylight." Su Li stopped smiling and said calmly, "If it wasn't like that, the cardinal outside definitely would be thinking of how to kill me right now, so at least you helped me solve the big trouble of the Li Palace."

Chen Changsheng thought about it, and it was indeed like that. It was just that solving the big trouble of the Orthodoxy did not mean he had the power to solve the next few troubles. Hua Jiefu had expressed his view extremely clearly before. Currently, the Orthodoxy indeed would not do anything to Su Li, but they would also definitely not help him. At most, it was a situation where the two sides would not assist each other.

As he thought about these matters, a giant boom suddenly resounded in the silent streets outside the inn. He walked to the window and pushed it open, only seeing the dust brought by the collapse of the buildings on the other side of the street. Walls and buildings constantly fell, as if a huge monster was currently rushing over. It was also like an earthquake spreading towards his position.

The priests outside the inn gave out exclamations of surprise, “The household... has used the emperor’s carriage!”

Hearing that, Chen Changsheng stared blankly. He looked at the growing cloud of dust on the opposite side of the street, and could feel the trembling of the ground. He thought, just what does this mean? Just who is currently approaching the inn? Before he could think even more, he leapt out of the window, landing on the stone steps in front of the inn. At that moment, Hua Jiefu also walked out from the inn. He stood beside him with an extremely grim expression.

“Who came?” Chen Changsheng asked.

“The emperor’s carriage of the Liang Household.” Hua Jiefu looked into the depths of the dust and furrowed his eyebrows. “The emperor’s carriage has not left their estate for almost a hundred years. Who would have thought it would be used today?”

Once again the name ‘Liang’ had popped up, as Chen Changsheng had come to expect.

In his journey to the south with Su Li, Chen Changsheng had learned that there were many groups in the cultivation world. He was even more vigilant against the clan of Liang, because Liang Xiaoxiao was surnamed Liang, and so was Liang Hongzhuang.

Liang was once the surname of the imperial family—the Liang clan was the imperial family of the previous dynasty. They once had an extremely close relationship from intermarriage with the current imperial family of the Zhou Dynasty, the Chen clan. A millennium ago, after the Chen clan had replaced the Liang clan, they still received great respect, perhaps because of the relationship of intermarriage that once existed, or perhaps because of shame. In general, they gave them a lot of exclusive opportunities.

After the Zhou Dynasty was founded, the Liang clan left the capital and returned to Tianliang County. They were titled as Princes, but in the end, they had once been sovereigns, so how could they be willing to accept such a fate? They still wished to revive their former glory, though it had already been windswept and battered by time. Other than the fact that the current Liang clan still had noble blood and received the respect of the people, they had long since lost their ability to change the world. It was probably exactly because of this that they could still persist in the north of the continent. However, the clan that once ruled the entire continent naturally had its own extraordinary bloodline. In the past thousand years, countless experts had arisen from the Liang clan, and currently, the most well known was the young Prince from the Liang Palace, Liang Wangsun.

Just as Hua Jiefu had said, the emperor's carriage of the Liang Household had not been used for a very long time. Today, the

carriage had left the palace, trampling over walls and buildings as it traveled towards the inn. With such a huge activity, it obviously meant that something big was going to happen. The only person in the world who had the right to sit in the carriage obviously was Liang Wangsun.

Before the Scholartree Manor expert who roamed the northern lands appeared, this Prince was probably the greatest trouble Su Li and Chen Changsheng had to solve. Liang Wangsun was actually not the name of the Prince—he was called Liang Zhen. However, there was no one in the entire Xunyang City who dared to call him by that name, so slowly, the entire continent also began to call him Liang Wangsun.

Third on the Proclamation of Liberation, Straightforward Liang Wangsun. This title originated from Liang Wangsun's personality, with the noblest bloodline and greatest innate talent. When the young prince did things, he did things very directly and very bluntly, or in other words, very tyrannically. The emperor's carriage of the Liang Palace was just too big, unable to travel to the street where the inn was. As a result, it began to tear down houses, tearing its way down from the north of Xunyang City. It really was extremely tyrannical.

With a bang, the buildings opposite the inn collapsed, and great amounts of dust flew into the air.

An extremely luxurious carriage slowly appeared in the clouds of dust.

The carriage was around ten zhang wide and also ten zhang long.

It was covered with extremely precious obsidian. It was carved into hundreds of layers of petals by a certain master, and seemed like a lotus seat.

On the two sides of the lotus seat stood a dozen or so docile boys and girls.

On such a big lotus seat sat one person.

The person was extremely handsome, and his black hair was combed extremely thin. His clothes seemed to be simple, but they were actually extremely exquisite, with an air of nobility. His sitting posture was extremely straight in the centre of the lotus seat. His right hand was on his knee and his left hand held a pestle. He leaned forwards slightly, and seemed like a sculpture. His eyes were also sculpture-like, not too angry and only with a cold feeling.

This person was Liang Wangsun.

He directly opened a great door through the myriad estates of Xunyang City.

He came to see the mountain.

And then push down the mountain.

(TL: Play on words. 开门见山 is straightforward but put literally, it is opening a door to see the mountain.)

# Chapter 384 - The Start Of A Grand Banquet

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The mountain that Liang Wangsun wanted to see and push down naturally was Mount Li.

The entire continent knew that Su Li was Mount Li.

In the past, the peak of the mountain was eminent and unapproachable. Even for experts high up on the Proclamation of Liberation, like Wang Po, Xiao Zhang, and Liang Wangsun, they were unable to challenge it head-on. However, right now, Su Li was heavily injured, and the peak had already begun to totter.

Liang Wangsun believed he had the qualifications and power to destroy this mountain peak. As a result, after he received this news, he rode the great carriage out of the estate, and arrived at the inn.

It was just that in front of the mountain, there stood another teenager.

If he wanted to push down the mountain, he needed to pass through the obstacle of this teenager.

“You are Chen Changsheng?”

Liang Wangsun looked at the teenager in front of the stone steps of the inn and asked calmly.

Chen Changsheng did not reply to this question, because he currently felt very nervous. Other than seeing a glance of Wang Po from far away at the entrance of the Mausoleum of Books, this was the first time he saw someone from the Proclamation of Liberation. These people were the true core powers of the human world. The blossoming age began with Liang Wangsun and those other names.

Of course, after traveling from Xining Village to the capital, he had already seen many true people of great importance. However, these important people were just too high up. No matter if it was the Pope or Su Li, even though they could be called close, Chen Changsheng was unable to accept it as real. However, the young prince on the black lotus seat was different, because, with Chen Changsheng's current level of cultivation and fame, he had already exceeded the boundaries of the Proclamation of Azure Clouds, entering the Proclamation of Gold Distinction. In other words, he was already very close to the Proclamation of Liberation. Only by being close could he feel true pressure, or in other words, the disparity.

Liang Wangsun raised his eyebrows. Chen Changsheng's silence made him rather surprised, and for some reason, he did not get angry. He asked calmly once again, "You are Chen Changsheng?"

This time, only after Chen Changsheng had properly returned to his senses did he realize Liang Wangsun was asking him.

He had come to kill Su Li. People who dared to kill Su Li would first put their attention to him. If it was another teenager, perhaps he would become a little arrogant and pleased, but Chen

Changsheng did not, because he did not have the awareness of being famous. Actually, no matter if it was the Ivy Festival, the Grand Examination, when he comprehended the Heavenly Tome Monoliths or afterwards when he accepted the position as the Principal of the Orthodox Academy, the various matters had already made him the most famous person in the continent. Even if it was a person like Liang Wangsun, they still needed to say a few words to him beforehand, even though it was just some pleasantry.

It was silent on the long street that the inn was on, and the dust slowly settled. Other than the priests who were scattered everywhere, many other people could be vaguely seen. Those people were probably members of the suicide squad from the palace, ready to attack the inn at any moment. However, they temporarily did not move, because everyone was waiting for Chen Changsheng's answer.

The young Daoist from Xining Village currently already had the right to speak on equal grounds with someone like Liang Wangsun.

However, unexpectedly, Chen Changsheng said nothing at all. He directly turned around and entered the inn, closing the doors before running up to the second floor in a blur.

Liang Wangsun sat upright and rigidly in the center of the black lotus. His raised his eyebrows even higher and had an expression that seemed like a smile yet not like a smile.

Pushing open the door that was tightly closed, Chen Changsheng arrived in front of Su Li's chair. Chen Changsheng said, "Let's run."

Su Li opened his eyes, glanced at him and said, “Already so bent on leaving without even having the time to admit defeat.”

Chen Changsheng lowered his head and did not say anything. His chest rose and fell.

He wanted to take Su Li and run, which naturally meant that he had already thrown out his original idea.

He admitted defeat. Because of the difference in strength, he could only admit defeat.

Because with only a glance, he knew that he was definitely unable to win against Liang Wangsun.

Not even a sliver of a chance as thin as a hair.

Outside the inn, the long street was quiet like before.

Liang Wangsun looked at the Xunyang City bishop from above and asked, “Will the Orthodoxy care about these things?”

Hua Jiefu did not have any expression on his face at all as he said, “I do not care about the life or death of people unrelated, but we must care for Principal Chen’s safety.”

Before, Chen Changsheng had said to the bishop that he could

treat it as if he did not know Chen Changsheng had come to the city. However, the entire Xunyang City knew he was there, so how could the people in the Orthodoxy not care for him?

“I don’t understand why this young Principal Chen cares for this but... I don’t care.”

Liang Wangsun pulled out a snow-white handkerchief from his sleeve to lightly wipe away the dust that had stuck to his clothes. He continued, “Since the carriage of the palace has been used, this matter must have a conclusion.”

Hua Jiefu looked at him with a serious expression and said, “His Holiness is waiting for Principal Chen’s return to the capital.”

Liang Wangsun’s actions paused slightly, and he said after being silent for a little, “Then send him back. If he isn’t willing to go, I might just kill him as well.”

Hua Jiefu shook his head and said, “If it’s like that, then the Liang Household will cease to be.”

The bishop spoke very plainly, without menace. It was because this was an impartial truth. If Chen Changsheng died in Xunyang City, everyone could imagine what reaction the Orthodoxy would have.

However, because he spoke so simply, it was unyielding.

Liang Wangsun went quiet once again, and threw the handkerchief that was slightly dusty off the carriage. He said with complete disinterest, “Cease to be? After what happened ten-odd years ago, for what reason do you think our Liang Household still exists? Today, I will kill Su Li in the full light of day, so could I be scared of Mount Li massacring my whole clan? Saying this to me is useless.”

Hua Jiefu suddenly felt the spring breeze turn cold. A dozen or so years ago, the most terrifying massacre had occurred after the bloody case of the Orthodox Academy. However, it was forcefully covered up by the Saints, so he did not know all of the details very clearly. Nevertheless , he knew very well how bitter of a price the Liang Household had paid.

He looked at the young prince in the carriage and said, “Why must you be so resolute?”

The black lotus carriage was very big. Liang Wangsun sat in the center, which he seemed to be sitting a level up, just about level with the second floor of the inn.

He looked at the tightly shut window of the second floor and sighed, “Who told him to yell those four words so resolutely?”

Xunyang City became a silent city of death. A massacre was about to occur before their eyes, all because of Chen Changsheng pushing open the windows and yelling those four words in the lovely spring sunshine.

‘Su Li is here.’

These four words pushed Chen Changsheng and Su Li into a deathtrap.

Actually, was it not the people who wanted to kill Su Li that pushed them into the dire straits?

The Orthodoxy was unable to act against Su Li.

The Great Zhou Army was unable to act.

The people who wanted to kill Su Li secretly, such as Liang Wangsun, could only kill him in the light of day.

Many things in the world could only be done and not said, let alone being seen by other people. Otherwise, it was hard to give an explanation for.

No matter if it was to the southerners or the books of history.

Such as killing Su Li.

This could have only been a bloody event hidden in the shadow of history, like the Coalition of Fallen Willow Plains in the past, like the change in the Hundred Herb Garden, or like the truth of Zhou’s disappearance all those years ago.

Instead, Chen Changsheng used four words, and made it into a grand occasion known by everyone.

“The grand banquet has already started, so how can you leave the party early?”

In the gloomy room of the inn, Su Li sat on the chair. He looked at the teenager with the lowered head in front of him and smiled slightly, “I taught you how to use troops, taught you how to use the Intellectual Sword as you wished. You learned very well, even exceeding my greatest hopes I placed on you, actually able to create so many changes with your yell from before... now, I’m really rather curious, just how long can you protect me?”

# Chapter 385 - There Are Times When To Save Someone, You Have To Learn How To Kill Someone

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Shouting out Su Li's hidden whereabouts had compelled all the people and matters that had been hidden in the night to be revealed under the light of the sun. Chen Changsheng had not intended for this to happen, but he had acted accorded to his heart's desire, as what he cared the most about was following his heart. However, before he had carried out this action, he had carefully considered what would happen afterwards, and thought that the good outweighed the bad. It was precisely why Liang Wangsun had sighed so regretfully.

This was a sort of strategy, and it was a calculation. All the principles Su Li had taught him on their journey south, like planning for war or sword techniques, had all been used. Looking at it from another point of view, the four words he had shouted into Xunyang City which basked in the spring sunshine were like a thrust from his Intellectual Sword into the pitch-black night, finally tearing a hole through it and finding a little light.

But when he saw Liang Wangsun with his own eyes, he instantly felt like there were some problems with his calculations. The problem here was not as he had said, that he could not beat Liang Wangsun so they had to escape, but rather that Liang Wangsun had appeared at all. Despite being the successor to his family, despite the upheaval of the public will, he had actually emerged into the full light of day to kill Su Li. Just why was this?

"Why?" Chen Changsheng asked Su Li.

Su Li replied, "Because they all have the surname 'Liang'."

Liang Xiaoxiao, Liang Hongzhuang, Liang Wangsun—these three people that had expressed the deepest desire to kill Su Li all had the surname of Liang. Were they all part of the royal Liang bloodline? And what sort of unresolvable enmity existed between Su Li and the Liang Household?

"After being an emperor, is there anyone that would be willing to stay as a prince?" Su Li looked out the window at the faintly visible black lotus upon the massive emperor's carriage. "The greatest desire of generation upon generation of masters of the Liang Household was to return to the capital and once again sit upon the imperial throne. It was just that they never had an opportunity, until finally, more than ten years ago, the capital fell into internal strife. At last, they finally saw a chance."

Chen Changsheng had heard Su Li talk about those events of the past, so he asked confusedly, "Weren't the Longevity Sect the ones seeking to rebel?"

Su Li replied, "In order to seek the world, your plans must be profound. Several hundred years ago, the Liang Household had already begun to infiltrate the Longevity Sect. More than ten years ago, when the Longevity Sect was provoking conflict, it was precisely through their excellent manipulations."

Chen Changsheng still did not understand. That Su Li had slain all the elders of the Longevity Sect in his assault and thus crushed

the several-hundred-year conspiracy of the Liang Household was truly something worthy of resentment, but why did it seem like they hated Su Li's guts?

Su Li said, "Amongst those elders, one of them had the surname of Liang. He was probably Liang Xiaoxiao's ancestor. As for why Liang Wangsun and Liang Hongzhuang hate me so much, perhaps it is because after I killed those people in the Longevity Sect, I also happened to come by Xunyang City, where I killed off all those old bastards of the Liang Household."

Chen Changsheng was speechless. He thought to himself, that's the same as killing the entire family. With such a bloody feud between them, it's no wonder that the younger generation of the Liang royal bloodline hold such enmity against Su Li, that Liang Xiaoxiao would not even hesitate to collude with the demons.

From outside the window, the conversation between Liang Wangsun and the bishop of Xunyang City could be heard.

Chen Changsheng silently listened to this conversation, then suddenly asked, "Senior, is it really necessary to kill all these people?"

An expression of derision appeared on Su Li's face. "Preparing to start lecturing again?"

Chen Changsheng shook his head. "I just feel that there should never have been so much blood spilled for this matter in the first place."

Su Li did not directly answer the question, instead saying, "Back then when the Longevity Sect and the Liang Household wanted to have the south invade the north, the capital at the time was in a state of complete mayhem. The imperial court and the Orthodoxy were fractured and ridden with internal strife. The only problem the southerners could not resolve was also their greatest problem. It was the existence of Tianhai. In the end, they found a method to solve this problem."

"What method?"

"They wanted me to go to the capital and kill Tianhai. Even if I could not kill Tianhai, they believed that Tianhai would be severely injured."

"Senior, did you go?" As soon the question left his mouth, Chen Changsheng knew that it was pointless.

Of course Su Li had not gone to the capital to kill the Tianhai Divine Empress, or else history would not have taken its current form. Just as expected, Su Li looked at him like he was an idiot, asking, "Do I look like I'm insane?"

Chen Changsheng thought to himself, it's those southerners that must have gone mad, to actually think of this idea that could never possibly be realized. He asked, "Back then, how did they attempt to persuade Senior?"

"They captured my wife and then imprisoned her in the cold pool

in the Longevity Sect. Then they righteously exhorted me."

When Su Li said these words, there was not much expression on his face, but even after the passage of ten or so years, Chen Changsheng still felt like he could sense his fury.

"Nobody likes to kill others, and neither do I."

Su Li ended it with these words, "If too much blood flows, it's very troublesome to clean the sword, let alone the clothes. So I don't like killing. But there are times when there are some people that have to die, when blood has to flow."

Chen Changsheng understood. These matters of the past that he had once heard about had finally been completely explained. By telling him this, Su Li wanted to communicate to him a very simple truth, and also no longer wanted to hear Chen Changsheng's advice.

In living in this world, if you want to live freely and protect those that you love from harm, you have to be strong enough—so strong that the whole world will admit that you are strong, will fear your strength. How can you prove it, and make the world admit this point? You must be willing to kill others, willing to let the entire world bleed.

Su Li was precisely like this. He had slain every last one of the elders of the Longevity Sect, and then almost annihilated the Liang Household, turning the continent into a river of blood. He could not restore his own wife's life, but in the following decade, no one

dared to threaten or use him, and no one dared to threaten his daughter.

Understanding did not mean acceptance, but Chen Changsheng had no means of saying anything else to Su Li, so he thought he might as well go talk to someone else. He walked to the window and pushed aside the curtain. He looked at Liang Wangsun seated on his black lotus on the emperor's carriage and very simply declared, "I want to protect him."

On Liang Wangsun's handsome and noble complexion appeared a smile that said he didn't understand. "Many people thought that you died in the Garden of Zhou. I did not think that you would actually die in Xunyang City."

Chen Changsheng's declaration was very simple, and Liang Wangsun's response was also very simple. Since he had come under the watch of countless gazes to kill Su Li, it indicated that he did not care for the threats of any man, even from the Orthodoxy.

"Back then, he did not kill you, he did not kill Liang Hongzhuang, nor did he kill Liang Xiaoxiao."

Chen Changsheng continued, "He left the Liang Household a path to retreat, so perhaps the Liang Household can also leave him a path to survive."

"But back then, very few people survived. Moreover, did you really think that counted as a path of retreat? No, what my household lost was the hopes and dreams of countless people and

countless centuries. But maybe I can give him a way to survive." Liang Wangsun callously declared, "If you let me chop off his four limbs and cripple his meridians, then I can let him live."

Chen Changsheng silently considered this for a few moments, before finally answering, "This is not fair."

Liang Wangsun answered, "Using blood to return blood, to use death in return for death, this is the fairest."

Chen Changsheng said, "Senior only went to the snowy plains for the sake of humanity. He was surrounded by the demons and severely wounded, or else you wouldn't even have the possibility of killing him. So at the very least, he should not die at the hands of humans, at least not this time, at least not this way. Regardless of how many people he once killed, even if he might really be a bad person."

At these words, the priests around the inn, as well as the Liang Household's suicide squad, felt their emotions change.

Liang Wangsun gazed at the window at Chen Changsheng and calmly said, "Perhaps what you say is reasonable. For a legend of a generation to die like this, I that killed him would presumably only leave behind in the annals of history the reputation of a thief or scoundrel, but...I don't care, and this world won't care. Because this is the only opportunity to kill him, and everyone in the world wants him dead."

Chen Changsheng asked, "Even if this is the equivalent of

conspiring with the demons?"

"This is a shameless murder. Don't even speak about conspiring with the demons; even if it was making a deal with the devil, so what?"

Liang Wangsun's tone was just and satisfied. As the buildings all around the inn collapsed one after another, the figures of cultivators began to appear.

Although the gates of Xunyang City were shut, how could this fact possibly obstruct those people who wanted to kill Su Li?

Suddenly, a fiery streak of light flashed through the sky. Accompanied by a sudden rise in temperature, a Red Cloud Qilin landed on one end of the long street. Xue He sat upon it, his armor still stained by the blood from that day. Soon after, Liang Hongzhuang, arrayed in his red dancing dress, appeared at the other end of the street. His charming complexion was still caked with dust, and the sword wounds were still distinctly visible on his body. It was a complete mystery how he had managed to hold on and rush so quickly back. Seeing Liang Hongzhuang appear, Hua Jiefu wrinkled his brow. On that day, it had been precisely this bishop of Xunyang City that had secretly told Liang Hongzhuang of Su Li's whereabouts.

"You see, even the Orthodoxy actually really wants him dead." Liang Wangsun looked at Chen Changsheng and said, "And how can you hold off the entire human world?"

Chen Changsheng looked all around at those figures in the surrounding streets and alleys. He did not know who these people were, what sort of reputation they had in the north, or what sort of sect or school they belonged to. He could only tell from their Qi just how frightening these people were. These people had come to kill Su Li. Xue He was a Great Zhou Divine General, so he would probably not take action. Liang Hongzhuang probably did not have the strength to attack. But these other people would attack. This was not even mentioning the fact that there was still that famous assassin, Liu Qing, concealed in the darkness. Today, in this battle, besides Liang Wangsun, the most frightening person was probably that assassin.

Su Li was heavily injured. This was like an invitation to the entire continent to attend a feast. Now, all the guests taking part in the feast had arrived. They would use their swords as chopsticks and prepared to drink a cup of blood in substitute for fine wine, then enjoy a banquet of human flesh. Chen Changsheng did not know if there would be any more guests to this feast, but he wanted to try to rip the dining table to shreds.

He stood by the window, gazing at Liang Wangsun in his emperor's carriage. His expression did not change, but his Qi slowly circulated. His spiritual sense rested upon the sheath of his dagger, connecting to the Black Dragon's spiritual soul, awakening those swords that had slept for many days.

Countless swords.

He began to make his calculations, prepared to ignite his true essence, and prepared to have his ten thousand swords sortie.

The Intellectual Sword and the Blazing Sword were the swords that had been taught to him by Su Li, while the ten thousand swords were his swords.

He wanted to see if he could use his improvements in the path of the sword to make up for the sword intent that had been used by the ten thousand swords, thereby repeating that scene in front of the Mausoleum of Zhou. Following that, he would directly kill Liang Wangsun in one strike.

Chen Changsheng was a genius of the upper level of Ethereal Opening. Liang Wangsun was a true expert at the top of the Proclamation of Liberation. No matter who looked at it—even he himself—they clearly understood that the distance between their strengths was like the size of a city.

But he still wanted to try and see if he could kill his opponent.

Because the situation was now decided. Only by killing Liang Wangsun could Su Li remain alive.

This was perhaps the newest truth Su Li had taught him.

# Chapter 386 - Somebody Came Riding On A Kite

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Liang Wangsun had been the first guest to arrive for this feast. With his identity and strength, as well as his status in the jianghu, the imperial court, and the world of cultivation, he absolutely was worthy of being the guest of honor. Thus, Chen Changsheng wanted to kill him, even if he clearly understood the yawning gap between them. Only by doing this could he intimidate the entirety of Xunyang City. Adding on his status in the Orthodoxy, he could make the people lose their will to take action against Su Li. This was Chen Changsheng's plan. Only by killing could he save a life, and only by being unreasonable could he make others see reason.

Silence reigned over the long street outside the inn. The bright and beautiful radiance of spring shone over the street upon which the dust had just settled.

With a crash, Chen Changsheng rammed through the window, carrying along pieces of gravel and wood shaving. In the time it took to take a breath, he had arrived on the street.

The emperor's carriage of the Liang Household was two stories high and stood in front of the inn. When he broke through the window, he ended up in front of the carriage.

His feet did not land on the carriage. His dagger had already left the sheath and was stabbing towards Liang Wangsun's forehead.

The dagger flew noiselessly, without any sort of power nor any

reverberations of boundless true essence. It was like an insignificant glimmer of bright light adding to the lovely spring sunshine, and yet it stunned many. Even Liang Wangsun's expression grew solemn.

The essence of the sword intent in this attack was extremely pure and extremely powerful, as if it was an existence that surpassed sword energy. The people that saw this dagger—whether the cultivators that had dared to come and kill Su Li or the priests of Xunyang City, or even the Liang Household's suicide squad and those normal servant girls who had no understanding of cultivation of the path of the sword—all felt their eyes ache somewhat.

That aching sensation came from Chen Changsheng's sword intent, that incomparably sharp and innately dominating sword intent—his dagger was the new generation of the Dragoncry Sword, and this strike was like a dragon emerging from the vast ocean. Light radiated everywhere, and this seemingly unremarkable glimmer was actually like a blazing sun, its light so blinding that everyone had to squint their eyes.

The crowd was shocked. It was only then that they understood that Chen Changsheng had cultivated his path of the sword to this level. Only Xue He and Liang Hongzhuang, who had already crossed swords with Chen Changsheng, had mentally prepared for this, so they had no reaction.

Although Chen Changsheng was already very well-known, ranking only under Qiushan Jun and Xu Yourong as the most talented cultivators of this younger generation, there were still few

people that had personally seen his cultivation. In Xunyang City this was especially so. As it was situated in the north, the cultivators only knew that he was necessarily no ordinary youth, but they had not imagined that at his young age, he had already cultivated to the peak of Ethereal Opening. Even more frightening was how profound his attainments in the path of the sword were. In this brief span of time, many people, including Xunyang City bishop Hua Jiefu, couldn't help but get a simply impossible notion —could it be that Chen Changsheng's attack truly could threaten Liang Wangsun?

Sitting on the emperor's carriage and directly confronting the edge of the dagger, Liang Wangsun could feel more clearly than anyone else Chen Changsheng's sword intent. And yet what caused confusion in all watching was that he continued to take no action.

He calmly gazed at Chen Changsheng's dagger, his eyes tranquil and indifferent, possessing a sense of nobility and inviolability. The Vajra Pestle suddenly began to shine with light, completely engulfing the brightness of Chen Changsheng's dagger. Was this a nigh perfect Star Domain? Just as Chen Changsheng was thinking about this, he suddenly felt that there was something off, because...

His dagger had very easily pierced through that light.

The man and dagger became one. The moment the dagger stabbed into that light, Chen Changsheng also entered the light.

His two feet had finally landed upon the Liang Household's emperor's carriage, treading upon solid ground. But his dagger

failed to pierce Liang Wangsun's forehead, and instead had stopped in front of it!

Liang Wangsun's left hand that had been hanging by his body had, at some point, been lifted up, obstructing the path of Chen Changsheng's dagger.

He had only used two fingers to hold the dagger fast.

These two fingers were rather slender, almost like a woman's. In reality, they were just like two mountain peaks.

Even if Chen Changsheng's dagger were an actual dragon, perhaps it would have still been held fast by those two mountain peaks, halting its advance.

Before he had broken through the window and attacked, Chen Changsheng had performed many calculations on this battle, all of them on searching for a weakness or gap in Liang Wangsun's Star Domain. He had not even considered that Liang Wangsun would not even show his Star Domain and only use two fingers to block his dagger. Was this the self-confidence and dignity of an expert of the Proclamation of Liberation?

Looking at Liang Wangsun's dignified eyes, Chen Changsheng suddenly felt like his body was a little cold—this person's strength and cultivation were far too unfathomable, many times stronger than he was—but the coldness in his body did not come from the difference in their strength. This was because he still concealed other methods; his true sword had not thrust out. Instead, the

coldness in his body came from a faint feeling that he had.

Liang Wangsun had not spread out his Star Domain. It had nothing to do with self-confidence, nothing to do with disdain, and it shouldn't be because Liang Wangsun wanted to humiliate him, because that did not match with his bearing and identity. It also did not seem like a mistake that a true expert would make. Then why did Liang Wangsun do this? Just as expected, in the very next moment, before Chen Changsheng had the time to use his true sword, Liang Wangsun made his move.

With a stimulation from his spiritual sense, the star fragments on the black lotus seat began to float, and a Qi divided the world into two.

Liang Wangsun had spread out his Star Domain. At the moment, Chen Changsheng was right in front of him, and thus was also in the Star Domain, or perhaps it was better to say that he was imprisoned in it. To Star Condensation experts, the most important use of a Star Domain was to protect themselves from any attacks. What reason did Liang Wangsun have for using it in this way? Chen Changsheng knew that there must be some deep meaning behind his opponent's actions. It was just that he could not think of it in such a short amount of time. However, his sword heart remained undisturbed, his sword intent as steady as ever. His right foot took a step forward, and the true essence in his body fiercely blazed.

Liang Wangsun's eyes grew even brighter, even more solemn, and even more serious. It was obvious that he had perceived that Chen Changsheng's true essence had drastically increased, and that

he had sensed the possible danger. Liang Wangsun knew that in the next moment, Chen Changsheng's true sword would arrive. But he did not know that this sword was several thousand swords. He only knew that simultaneously with this attack, Su Li would die.

It all required only a moment of time, but Chen Changsheng would not necessarily be able to injure Liang Wangsun, while Liang Wangsun seemed very certain that Su Li would die.

As a result, very shortly after, Chen Changsheng understood that there was no way he could wait until the end of this moment.

Because at the beginning of this moment, a snowflake drifted down from the sky onto the emperor's carriage of the Liang Household.

Countless snowflakes fell on the streets surrounding the inn.

In Xunyang City which was in the midst of late spring, a sudden shower of snow descended.

Chen Changsheng looked into Liang Wangsun's eyes, and within he saw many emotions, yet he did not see any killing intent. From this he understood that Liang Wangsun had never planned to kill him. Yes, even if Liang Wangsun was this sort of person, as long as it was not absolutely essential, then not even he wanted to kill this youth from the Orthodox Academy who received in no small measure the trust and even love of the Pope and Mei Lisha.

He had braved the attack and then used his Star Domain, keeping Chen Changsheng on his carriage so that he could not take action.

This battle was not going to take place between the two of them.

There was another person that would actually attack and kill Su Li.

Who was this person? Who would be the last guest to arrive for this feast?

The radiance of spring had already been obscured by the wind and snow.

From the snowy sky, there suddenly descended a person.

It was a freak, his face covered by a white piece of paper. Two holes had been punched through the paper, revealing two eyes. As for the rest of the paper, a few simple lines had been drawn to represent the nose and the mouth.

The freak's eyes were emotionless, soulless, loveless, and cold to the point of lunacy.

There was a line tied to the freak's waist. The other end of the line was in the sky, tied to a colossal paper kite.

That kite was incessantly sprinkling bits of paper over the

ground.

What snow?

The snow that drifted down to Xunyang City had originally been paper.

The freak's cultivation was powerful to a frightening extent. Even though he was still several dozen zhang from the ground, a tyrannical and crazy Qi had already filled the streets. Those cultivators that were somewhat weaker could only close their eyes in resistance, while those ordinary mortals immediately fell unconscious.

The black tiles and old eaves of the inn were, in a flash, crushed into a fine gravel. With a dull boom, the roof of the inn completely collapsed and the walls were sundered, exposing the scene within.

Amidst the flying dust and snow, the crowd could faintly make out the ground filled with shattered beams and furniture.

In the middle of the ruins, there was a chair.

A middle-aged man sat in the chair, his hand holding a shabby old yellow paper umbrella.

The streets suddenly grew deathly still.

This was the first time many people had set eyes on Su Li's true appearance.

From that man descending from the sky, a spear stabbed out at Su Li.

With the sudden stab of the metal spear, the paper snow scattered, and the wind gusted and thunder boomed!

The people around the inn all exclaimed in surprise.

"Xiao Zhang!"

"Painted Armor Xiao Zhang!"

A person had come riding a kite to Xunyang City to kill another.

He had sprinkled paper made into snowflakes beforehand so that he could send off the person he had come to kill.

Because he believed that now that he had come, that person would inevitably die.

Even if that person was Su Li.

Such a crazy affair—besides that madman ranked second on the Proclamation of Liberation, who else could do it?

Such an unbridled appearance—besides Painted Armor Xiao Zhang, who else could it be?

The metal spear thrust forward, and Xunyang City shook.

This was Xiao Zhang's unbridled spear. Even if Su Li were uninjured and his cultivation at its peak, presumably he would also have to seriously respond to it. Right now, he was heavily injured, so how could he receive this spear?

(TN: Xiao Zhang and ‘unbridled’ is actually a play on words by the author, since Xiao Zhang ‘肖张’ and unbridled ‘嚣张’ share the same pronunciation in Chinese.)

At the moment, Chen Changsheng was imprisoned by Liang Wangsun on the street, so who could help him block this spear?

# Chapter 387 - The Stupid Boy's Stupid Sword

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In the ruins of the inn, Su Li sat up on the chair. His eyes were closed like he was asleep, but he was actually awake.

His hand gripped the Yellow Paper Umbrella, but it did not carry the intention of holding the sheath and pulling out the sword.

That metal spear that descended from the sky was only several zhang from him, and his black hair had already begun to waft in the air.

This peerless expert that had once been undefeatable had finally been forced into desperate straits. Who could rescue him?

Su Li had no friends. He had never trusted others besides the people of Mount Li.

Yet Mount Li was too far. In Xunyang City, there was currently only Chen Changsheng.

The only person that could help him block this spear was also Chen Changsheng.

Chen Changsheng had to help him block this spear.

Consequently, something occurred that exceeded the expectations of everyone present. The streets around the inn

suddenly began to grow extremely hot. The paper snow that fluttered down from the sky danced around even more swiftly than before. Some of the paper pieces that landed on the emperor's carriage even began to curl up as they were scorched.

This heat originated from Chen Changsheng's body.

He was using an almost insane method to burn his true essence.

This was precisely the second sword Su Li had given to him: the Blazing Sword.

His sword intent violently soared, filling that space on top of the emperor's carriage.

This berserk sword style possessed the soaring sword energy of the Burning Heaven Sword, the unique secrets of the Golden Crow Sword, and in the instant that the true essence was set ablaze, it possessed the resolve and daring to die for a good cause that was part of the Mount Li Sword Style's final move.

This sword style had originally been specially developed by Su Li so that Chen Changsheng could surpass cultivation levels and battle with experts.

When he had first used it in that tea house by the official road, Chen Changsheng's Blazing Sword had directly chopped that Star Condensation tyrant of the north, Lin Pingyuan, into a pile of trash. Even if Liang Wangsun's cultivation was unfathomably

profound, when faced with this attack, even he was somewhat moved.

Liang Wangsun loosened his fingers and turned them into a sword, while his Vajra Pestle swished up to meet the attack.

But Chen Changsheng's Blazing Sword did not actually thrust at him.

He reversed his dagger and stabbed forward once more, but his target was not Liang Wangsun's forehead, rather a certain space in the air to the right of him.

This attack seemed very low-key, but it actually possessed a deep meaning. The location which the edge of the sword pointed at required a massive amount of knowledge.

This was the first sword Su Li had given him: the Intellectual Sword.

The Intellectual Sword required a vast number of calculations, a talent for deduction, a brightly lit sword heart, and...extremely good luck.

For a Star Condensation expert like Liang Wangsun, their Star Domain could be called perfect. Even if Chen Changsheng's attack was going from the inside to the outside, it was still extraordinarily difficult to break through. Thus, at this moment, he could only do his utmost.

Perhaps because his fate was bad, or perhaps because it was too good, whenever he did his utmost, his luck would always be all right. With a light crack, the dagger pierced a small hole through Liang Wangsun's Star Domain.

Chen Changsheng's figure abruptly vanished. Emitting heat and sweeping up bits of paper, he returned to the inn.

This was the Yeshi Step.

The interior of the inn was a complete mess. Su Li sat in the chair, his eyes closed like he was waiting for death.

That metal spear pierced through the snowy sky and was about to run through his abdomen.

Chen Changsheng appeared in front of Su Li.

Everyone that looked at him felt their eyes ache. This had nothing to do with the sword intent from the very beginning, but because his body was currently exuding a terrifying heat. Although there were no flames on his body, he still gave the feeling like he was aflame.

Confronting this spear which fell down from the sky, Chen Changsheng bared his dagger in front of him. The dagger did not grow brighter, and the might of a dragon did not make its appearance. It seemed very ordinary, like a rock or a pile of sand.

When rock and sand were mixed together, they could be made into a dike.

This metal spear descending from the sky was frighteningly powerful, like a flood that was inundating the banks.

As Chen Changsheng held his dagger horizontally, it seemed like a massive dike had appeared before this devastating deluge.

This was the third sword Su Li had taught to him.

This sword had a very idiotic name. It was called: The Stupid Sword.

According to Su Li's words, this was a very stupid sword style, so only the stupidest of people could learn it. This sword style was also the most natural, because there was simply no way it could be used to face one's enemies. It could only be used for defense.

It was called the Stupid Sword because to learn this sword, there was no other method but practice through repetition, to practice until the seas dried up and stones rotted away, to practice until the stars turned and the Big Dipper moved, to practice for as long as the heavens existed and the earth persisted, such that it should be impossible for someone to ever confirm that they had learned it.

When Chen Changsheng heard these words, he had completely put the idea of learning this sword out of his mind. Only when Su

Li said that this Stupid Sword could be considered the world's most powerful defensive sword style did he change his mind. Once the sword had left Mount Li, Su Li's attainments on the path of the sword had become even more exceptional, and his experience was broad and deep. His judgment would naturally not be wrong.

But when Chen Changsheng began to properly learn this Stupid Sword, he began to regret his decision.

Because not even Su Li had successfully learned this sword. In all of Mount Li, even in all of the continent, there was not one person that had successfully learned this sword. Not even along the course of the interminable river of history could one find a person that had learned this sword. To describe it another way, this sword style existed only in books, existed only in some imaginary path of the sword. It had never appeared in reality.

Su Li had said that the reason he had never been able to learn this sword was that he was just too much of a genius. His sword was free and unburdened, unwilling to accept such constraints. But there was truly a possibility that Chen Changsheng could learn this sword. This was because...in certain aspects, Chen Changsheng really was very stupid.

Chen Changsheng would naturally not put any more faith in Su Li's words. And yet, he really did begin to very stupidly learn the sword. He relentlessly practiced it, day and night, until at some point, he felt like he had seemingly learned this sword.

But it was impossible to confirm, because he had never tried it before. Until now.

That unbridled metal spear pierced through the snowy sky and descended.

The simultaneous assault of ten thousand swords was no use here, because it was very obvious that the freak riding the kite was completely insane. To kill Su Li, he wouldn't care in the slightest if ten thousand holes were stabbed through his body.

Chen Changsheng could only use this one sword.

Since he was blocking a spear, there was naturally nothing he could do but block it.

He held his dagger horizontally in front of him, staring at the approaching spear and that fluttering red ribbon. His mind grew extremely tense and his body grew as stiff as a board. But his sword heart was incomparably calm, and his expression could even be described as somewhat dull.

At this time, one could truly say that this boy looked rather stupid.

The red ribbon danced, tearing through the paper snow.

The metal spear reached the interior of the inn. The bright and unbridled spear tip met with the dark and steady dagger edge.

In a flash, the tip of the spear struck the dagger several thousand times.

The pieces of paper that drifted in the inn were slashed into bits and turned into powder. It seemed to become even more snowy, the snow more real.

There was a massive boom.

Waves of Qi burst out from the inn. The paper snow was completely expelled from the inn, enveloping all the streets in a several hundred zhang radius around the inn.

From the silence arose an ear-piercing sound.

It was the sound of metal grinding against metal.

The metal spear was slowly moving backwards.

Chen Changsheng still stood in front of Su Li.

His face was pale and his body was trembling nonstop, especially his two legs.

It seemed like he would collapse in the next moment, but he did not.

He had not even taken one step back.

He himself did not know of this fact because that metal spear had truly been too powerful, too terrifying. In the very last moment, he had even shut his eyes. Even now, he still had not opened them.

The aftermath of violently igniting his true essence was still present. His body temperature was extremely high, blazing hot beyond belief. From time to time, a bit of paper would land on his body, then immediately ignite, giving off several strands of white smoke. It gave him a rather strange appearance.

The crowd looked at Chen Changsheng as he gave off white strands of smoke, so shocked that they couldn't find any words to say.

Impossibly, he had forcefully broken through Liang Wangsun's Star Domain, returned to the inn, then firmly blocked that metal spear which tore through the sky. Just how had this youth done it? It must be known that no matter how much of a genius he was, he was only sixteen years old! The opponents he faced today were definitely not his peers in the Grand Examination, but true experts on the Proclamation of Liberation!

"Extraordinary, to actually block my spear."

An emotionless voice resounded from the inn.

Chen Changsheng opened his eyes, finally seeing clearly that

freak that had come in on a kite.

The freak's body was somewhat slim. He wore a set of shabby short garments, exposing half of his arm and his calves. A white piece of paper covered his face. A nose and mouth were drawn on the white paper, leaving only the two eyes exposed.

Chen Changsheng was truly extraordinary—this was what everyone present was thinking.

Because he could block this person's metal spear, because this person was Painted Armor Xiao Zhang.

From the opening of the Boiling Stone Summit forty years ago, the world of cultivation formally welcomed the generation of blossoming flowers. With the rush of countless geniuses setting forth, Painted Armor Xiao Zhang had always been the most dazzling name. His fame was on par with Wang Po of Tianliang, and he was one of humanity's true experts. And in many people's eyes, he was much more frightening than Wang Po of Tianliang, because he was a lunatic.

Many years ago after the conclusion of that Boiling Stone Summit, Wang Po had taken the top spot, while Xun Mei, Liang Wangsun, and the rest were all behind him. Xiao Zhang was not willing to accept this, and so in order to surpass Wang Po, he forcefully cultivated a method that had some sort of problem. In the end, he lost himself in madness and failed. However, just as everyone thought that he would decay and fade away, who could have imagined that he would actually cast off the entirety of his cultivation and cultivate anew? And who would think that in a

short few years, he would actually once again enter the upper level of Star Condensation!? How crazily powerful was such a will!

Because he had gone mad, Xiao Zhang was not able to attend the second year's Grand Examination. At the same time, his face had been heavily injured, almost to the point of disfigurement. It was also at that time that he began to cover his face with a sheet of white paper, which he had never taken off since. The reason the world knew him as Painted Armor Xiao Zhang was, besides the fact that the sect he came from was famous for its painted armor, precisely due to this sheet of white paper.

The tales say that at the time, the Divination Elder had once asked him, "Why do you not use a mask?" Xiao Zhang replied, "I use a white sheet of paper to cover my face only because I don't want to scare small children, not because I'm ashamed of seeing others. Why should I use a mask?" It was just that the Xiao Zhang of that time could not have imagined how much fear that white sheet of paper would inspire in his opponents in the following thirty-odd years.

This was Painted Armor Xiao Zhang. He was insane and also extremely unbridled, and there was no obstacle that his spear could not overcome! With Chen Changsheng's current age and level of cultivation, to actually be able to block his spear was truly an extremely outrageous matter.

At this point, Liang Wangsun also looked over at Chen Changsheng, thinking about that first attack Chen Changsheng had aimed at him, as well as the attack which had broken through his Star Domain. He was rather confused—how had the first attack

been so berserk? And the second strike actually seemed like it could think, like it was alive! What sort of sword technique was that? Why had he never seen such a thing in the annals of the Orthodoxy!?

He and Xiao Zhang had not imagined that this youth would be even stronger than had been described in the rumors. When they first learned of his exploits in the capital, such as the Grand Examination, these true experts did not view it in a good light. It must be known that in the Grand Examination thirty-odd years ago, if they had also gone, then Snow-treading Xun Mei would not necessarily have gotten first rank on the First Banner. Only when Chen Changsheng comprehended the entirety of the front mausoleum in one day did they begin to sense that Chen Changsheng's talent was truly shocking. But how could it be this strong?

But even if he was stronger, there was a limit. It could only come up to a certain point.

A slight breeze brushed the white paper, making it rustle. Just like that, Chen Changsheng collapsed, sitting on the dusty and rubble-filled floor. He was not bleeding, but his wrist bone was broken. He sat in front of the chair, powerless to lift up his dagger once more.

Liang Wangsun shifted his gaze to the chair behind Chen Changsheng. Xiao Zhang also directed his gaze to that chair—they would never forget who the person sitting in the chair was, and as a result, they understood why Chen Changsheng's sword had been so strong.

Su Li sat in the chair. At some point, he had opened his eyes.

He lifted up his right hand and patted Chen Changsheng's head. Teasing, he said, "I guess you really are stupid enough."

Chen Changsheng's voice was very feeble, but still as stubborn as ever. "Just how I am stupid?"

Su Li replied, "Shouldn't you have gone just now? Just what are you sticking around here for?"

Chen Changsheng answered, "If I left, what would happen to you?"

Su Li asked, "As simple as that?"

Chen Changsheng was puzzled. "How could it not be this simple?"

Su Li was silent for a few moments, then sighed regretfully, "No wonder Qiushan couldn't learn this sword, my little girl couldn't, and not even I could do it, but...you could do it."

# Chapter 388 - The Meanings Of Our Lives (I)

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Su Li asked again, "Just now when you went downstairs, why didn't you bring the Yellow Paper Umbrella with you?"

The Yellow Paper Umbrella possessed an incredible defensive power, capable of blocking the full-force blow of a Star Condensation expert. Chen Changsheng had heard Zhexiu say as much in Wenshui, but it was just that in the past few days, the umbrella had always remained in Su Li's hands. Moreover, from the day they left the snowy plain, he had always felt that the umbrella was a sword, so he had completely forgotten about this property of the umbrella. Now when he heard Su Li's words, he couldn't help but give a vacant stare.

He honestly admitted, "I forgot."

Su Li sighed, "You really are very stupid."

As the pair was talking, Xiao Zhang did not move, Liang Wangsun did not move, and the people in the streets around the inn all did not move.

Because the person speaking was Su Li.

In the past several centuries, Su Li had served as the idol of countless people in the world of cultivation. He was the soul and sword of the human world. He could be killed, but he could not be humiliated, because that was tantamount to humiliating the human world itself. At this moment, even the most crazed Xiao

Zhang would not mind waiting for a few more moments.

The ending had already been decided. The common people had accepted this killing, and the only person to stand in front of Su Li, Chen Changsheng, had already lost. The gap in strength between both sides was far too wide. In the cultivation world's first generation of blooming flowers, four experts were stronger than the rest. Snow-treading Xun Mei had died in front of the Divine Path in the Mausoleum of Books, so there still remained three. Amongst these three, two of them had come to Xunyang City. What could Chen Changsheng do?

A broken wall behind the inn could no longer bear the gentle push of the wind and collapsed with a rumble, stirring up the dust once more. As the dust settled, the bishop of Xunyang City, Hua Jiefu, appeared within the inn. Looking at Chen Changsheng, he solemnly said, "Your Eminence can no longer change this situation, so why not let this situation end in a somewhat calmer fashion?"

Chen Changsheng lowered his head, saying nothing.

Su Li lifted up his right hand again and patted him on the shoulder. He smiled as he said, "What sort of person am I? Is a little kid like you really prepared to stand guard in front of me for the rest of your life?"

Chen Changsheng understood his meaning and began to arduously drag himself to the side.

When the Liang Household's emperor's carriage had arrived, he had been standing by the window. When Xiao Zhang's spear had descended, he had stood in front of the chair. Even when he had collapsed, he had still collapsed in front of the chair. His strength had already been completely expended. At this final moment, whether it was out of respect or some other reason, he felt he should allow Su Li himself to confront this tribulation. Thus, he moved aside.

Su Li sat in the chair, his hand grasping the Yellow Paper Umbrella. He gazed at Xiao Zhang in front of him, Liang Wangsun in his emperor's carriage, as well as the crowd on the streets. His expression was serene, free and uncaring, as if all these people were just a bunch of idlers.

The sky above Xunyang City grew somewhat gloomy. The paper snow had already ceased falling, but a sudden drizzle began to rain down.

In those streets sprinkled by the rain, there was only absolute silence. For a very long time, no one said anything.

Xiao Zhang inclined his head and looked at Su Li, his eyes showing an unprecedented focus and fervor. It was like he was admiring an extremely precious piece of porcelain which would soon be personally shattered by him.

The white paper on his face was soaked by the fine rain and began to change shape. It appeared even more comical, and even more frightening. Soon after, he began to slightly shudder. A voice like an iron wire incessantly being struck penetrated through the

white paper. "It's truly meaningful that even a person like you will die."

When he said these words, Xiao Zhang's voice began to tremble even more. It was very excited, and also somewhat frustrated—he was excited because he was about to see with his own eyes and personally take part in a most important shift in history, but he was frustrated for an even more complex reason.

Su Li looked at him like he was looking at some heavily wounded little animal. His voice full of pity, he said, "Every person has to die. Do you not even understand a simple truth like this? Everyone says that your insanity is similar to mine, but why is that you seem so much like an idiot right now?"

If it were any other person that called him an idiot, Xiao Zhang would definitely have lost his mind, not stopping until his opponent had been rendered into a pile of chunks. Yet when he heard Su Li's words, he didn't even get angry. On the contrary, his eyes became extremely sincere. "You see, the people that showed today are all bastards, or else they're just piles of trash. It's meaningless to die under their hands."

Su Li was in an unpleasant mood. "Are you really an idiot? Dying under anyone's hands is meaningless."

Xiao Zhang straightened his chest and said, "Can you see how I am? Dying under my hands always has some meaning."

Chen Changsheng couldn't help but ask, "Does this way you all

are doing this have meaning?"

They were all talking about meaning, but it wasn't the same sort of meaning.

Xiao Zhang looked at him and his eyes suddenly turned cold, his voice even more demented. He yelled, "Of course it has meaning! He's Su Li! How could he die at the hands of those pieces of trash? It's obvious that he can only die under my spear!"

Of course, in the minds of many people, even if he couldn't battle, even if he was so injured that he was almost a cripple, in the end, Su Li was Su Li. He had never lived out his life in this world in any ordinary manner, so how could he so ordinarily leave it?

Chen Changsheng could find no words to respond, but Su Li had his own words that he wanted to say.

"I oppose it." He looked at the crowd outside the inn and said very solemnly and seriously, "No matter how I die, I won't agree."

The rainy streets once again grew completely silent, but the atmosphere was different from before. This period of quiet originated from astonishment. Not everyone here had met Su Li, and none of them had imagined that the legendary Junior Martial Uncle of Mount Li would actually be this sort of person. Even at the very last moment of his life, he was still undisciplined and frivolous, not even possessing an iota of the bearing proper for a figure of legends.

"Your objection is in vain."

Liang Wangsun walked into the ruins of the inn. After silently gazing at Su Li sitting in the chair for a few moments, he bowed. Then he said, "Ten-odd years ago, when you killed three hundred people of my Liang Household, you should have known that this day would come."

He then turned to Chen Changsheng at Su Li's side and said, "As I just said, to use a life to repay a life is the fairest matter, let alone the fact that his one life is paying back for three hundred lives."

Su Li pushed his messy black hair to behind his shoulders, then said very unconcernedly, "Whatever you say lah."

Hearing this "lah" word, Chen Changsheng, for some indescribable reason, began to think about Luoluo, and then he began to think about that assassination in the Orthodox Academy, about that demon assassin. He thought about Black Robe and about the battle on the snowy plain. As a result, he still firmly believed that this was not fair, but he no longer had the ability to insist upon his opinion.

The fine rain slowly drizzled down, floating about like threads or string.

Several hundred gazes watched the ruins of the inn, watched Su Li sitting upon his chair, boiling hot and yet icy cold, both happy and reverential.

Su Li's left hand held the Yellow Paper Umbrella, but from beginning to end, his right hand never held the intention of gripping its handle.

From the snowy plains to Xunyang City, through tens of thousands of li of wind and snow, dust and road, these people had already confirmed many times the authenticity of the news: Su Li was heavily injured, incapable of battle. Yet no one dared to look down on him. The most terrifying demon assassination of the past several hundred years, personally planned by Black Robe, had not even managed to kill him. How could a man like this so simply die?

"Miracle" seemed to be a noun that the heavens had created especially for people like him.

The streets were deathly still, with an oppressive and tense air hanging over them.

No one knew when Xiao Zhang and Liang Wangsun would take action.

Just at this moment, a person preemptively took action.

A rock that had been soaked by the rain came flying from the street and struck Su Li's face.

There was a dull thump.

A stream of blood flowed down from Su Li's forehead.

Chen Changsheng had no strength to help him block that rock.

Su Li also had no strength to block that rock, or even avoid it—one strike to behead a Demon General, one glance to see through a legendary Star Condensation expert, and yet now he didn't even have the strength to avoid a rock.

The streets remained silent, but the atmosphere somewhat changed.

In the drizzling rain, a roar of laughter could be heard.

The crowd turned to look and then realized that the person laughing was the Star Mysteries Sect leader, Lin Canghai. It had been precisely him who had thrown the rock.

Lin Canghai looked up to the second floor of the inn. With a rancorous and elated laugh, he said, "Su Li, even if all you were today was a dog, you would know to avoid a rock. Right now, it turns out that you're even less than a dog!"

In the drizzle, Su Li's clothes were soaked and his face was pale. As the blood slowly flowed down his head, he seemed exceptionally lonely.

Seeing this scene, although everyone there had come with the single purpose of killing Su Li, they each had their own emotions.

# Chapter 389 - The Meanings Of Our Lives (II)

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The vast majority of the cultivators surrounding the inn were at Ethereal Opening. A small amount of them had successfully broken into Star Condensation, so in the world of cultivation, they could already be considered superior experts. To ordinary people, they could be considered even loftier existences. However, if this scene had occurred in the past, these people would be nothing more than a gathering of ants compared to Su Li. It was just that now that he was confronting the blustering swagger of the ants, he actually couldn't make the smallest response. He could only lower his head in the rain.

Su Li silently watched as the blood flowed down from the corner of his eyebrows to his chest. His face, washed by the rain, was somewhat pale. This was because of his injuries, or perhaps it also had something to do with his emotions. With the falling of the rain, a dismal mood spread itself through the ruins of the inn.

Precisely as Chen Changsheng had said, if he had not battled with the demons, how could he have suffered such heavy injuries? If he had not been doggedly pursued after leaving the snowy plains until he had finally been encircled in Xunyang City, how could he have been humiliated by these people? And he would soon die at the hands of these people; how could this fact not cause grief and indignation, and even sorrow?

At the distant end of the long street, Xue He slightly raised his brows. The words of the sect master of the Star Mysteries Sect had been utterly unpleasant. The Red Cloud Qilin whose reins were in his hands lowered its head, allowing the water to drip down from its fiery mane. It was like it could not stand to see such a sight.

Xiao Zhang and Liang Wangsun maintained their silence. Bishop Hua Jiefu of Xunyang City used his eyes to express his feelings, causing a priest to walk into the crowd, and then upon reaching Sect Master Lin Canghai, whisper a few words into his ear.

The rancorous and elated laughter stopped. Lin Canghai looked at the people on the second floor and grimly laughed. "I could kill him right now, so what harm is there in me humiliating him with a few words? What a sham."

He was the sect master of the Star Mysteries Sect, and his family was a tyrant of the north. Moreover, his cultivation was high, already at the middle level of Star Condensation. As a result, he had been raised with an arrogant and domineering temperament, not fearing anyone. There was no way he would miss out on an opportunity to humiliate Su Li.

Su Li lifted up his head and looked down at the street. He pushed the hair soaked by the rain backwards. His expression was calm, as if he had not been struck by that rock that had flown through the rain or been affected by those humiliating words. "Who are you?"

"Haha...if this were in the past, your sort of behavior might really be a sort of humiliation. But right now, you aren't even worth a degenerate dog, so why keep up the strong front? You're only making yourself look more ridiculous."

Lin Canghai looked up to the inn and sneered, "A few days ago by the road, you killed an important man from my Lin clan, as well as

dozens of my Lin clan's elites. Today, why can't I take your life in exchange!?"

Su Li glanced at Chen Changsheng.

Chen Changsheng finally realized that this person had originally been a relative of northern tyrant Lin Pingyuan. On their journey south, under Su Li's directions, he had battled with and killed a few people. Only when he killed Lin Pingyuan did he not have any qualms about it. This was because Lin Pingyuan was a bandit that had committed all sorts of abominable deeds, an evil man whose hands were covered in the blood of innocents.

He declared, "I killed Lin Pingyuan."

Lin Canghai was a little stunned by these words.

Without waiting for a reply, Chen Changsheng added, "If you want to take revenge, you should kill me."

Lin Canghai's expression subtly changed.

Still not waiting for an answer, Chen Changsheng stared into his eyes and continued, "But I know that you don't dare to kill me, because I'm the Principal of the Orthodox Academy. How could you possibly dare to move against me?"

Lin Canghai's mood became a tiny bit more apprehensive.

Finally, Chen Changsheng declared, "So if I can survive this day, I will definitely think of a way to kill you."

At the moment, he was extraordinarily angry, so he said these words very seriously.

A burst of cold suddenly rushed through Lin Canghai's body.

In the cultivation world, he possessed considerable status, especially in the northern part of the continent, but how could it be compared with the Orthodoxy's? With Chen Changsheng's status and identity in the Orthodoxy, if he really did have a mind to deal with him, how could he and his sect hold on? He suddenly felt a profound sense of regret. At a complete loss for what to do, he shouted out to the surroundings, "Is the Orthodoxy allowed to just bully others like this!?"

After yelling these words, he had originally thought that he would receive some support. It must be known that they had all come here to kill Su Li, so they should have been of the same mind. Yet he could not have imagined that nobody on the streets paid him the slightest bit of attention. It was only then that he understood that even though everyone had come to kill Su Li, none of them dared to offend the Li Palace. Naturally, there was also no one who dared to offend Chen Changsheng.

"How like a small child to say such childish words."

Su Li completely ignored Lin Canghai and looked at Chen

Changsheng. "For a matter like killing someone, you should just do it directly. There's no need to give any sort of forewarning."

Chen Changsheng said nothing. From his sleeve, he took out a handkerchief, then began to carefully wipe the blood and water off Su Li's face.

"But it's reasonable for you to be angry. Something like throwing a rock is really too petty, too vulgar. There's no meaning to it."

Su Li let him wipe the blood off his face, so his voice came out somewhat indistinctly.

On the side, Xiao Zhang cut in, "Correct, it truly was meaningless."

Su Li replied, "Then please make way."

Xiao Zhang silently, without a hint of reticence, stood aside and opened a path.

A path that led from the ruins of the inn's second floor to the street.

Many people had noticed and were rather confused. Lin Canghai was even more confused. Grimly laughing at Su Li, he said, "An old dog like you can't even crawl, so what does it matter if you delay a little longer?"

Su Li expressionlessly looked at him. The left hand gripping the Yellow Paper Umbrella abruptly moved.

The thumb of his left hand pushed in the direction of the umbrella's handle. With a swish, a tiny section of the handle came out.

The umbrella handle was the hilt of a sword.

Inside the Yellow Paper Umbrella was the Heaven Shrouding Sword.

Half of the sword emerged from the sheath.

At present, Lin Canghai was still on the street, cursing him as a dead dog and other similar sorts of filthy language.

Suddenly, his voice abruptly came to a halt.

On his throat, a fresh sword scar appeared, blood slowly flowing out of it.

When the people nearest to him saw this image, their faces suddenly turned pale and they were shocked speechless.

Lin Canghai didn't seem to notice that his throat had been severed. He was still pointing at the second floor of the inn,

cursing something. It was just that no voice came out, so the scene looked extremely strange and frightening.

After a moment, he finally reacted.

He subconsciously rubbed his throat. Upon withdrawing his hand and seeing blood, he suddenly sensed pain.

His face was pale, his eyes filled with fear and confusion. He howled in pain, but it was impossible for his howls to emerge.

He turned, thinking to escape from the inn, and yet when he took a step back, he realized that his two legs had already been cut off at the knees.

Lin Canghai heavily crashed into a pool of blood, clutching his throat while he made some noises, his legs already severed at the knees.

On seeing this scene, the crowd dispersed in alarm, keeping far away from him.

In a short time, Lin Canghai ceased to struggle, and thus died. On his dying breath, he still could not close his eyes. His eyes were filled with shock and confusion, never understanding just what had occurred.

Su Li was heavily injured and on the verge of death, an old dog that couldn't even crawl. How could he need only a single strike to

kill me?

There were still many people as shocked, afraid, and confused as Lin Canghai was.

A deathly stillness once again settled over the street. The crowd once again turned to the ruined second floor of the inn, looking at the man on the chair. They were filled with reverence and unease. He really was worthy of being called the strongest master of the path of the sword over the past several centuries. Even when he seemed on his final breaths, this single strand of sword intent still possessed such might, able to kill a Star Condensation expert!

Chen Changsheng was somewhat amazed, and then relieved. He felt rather happy.

Senior said it right. For a matter like killing someone, it really only requires doing it; there is no need for a forewarning.

The umbrella handle slowly returned, and the sharpness around Su Li gradually retreated. He had once again returned to being a middle-aged man.

He sat in the chair, gazing at Lin Canghai's fallen corpse on the street, then impassively said, "Although I can't even crawl, killing a person like you in one strike is still not difficult for me."

Liang Wangsun's expression was abnormally solemn.

Xiao Zhang's eyes hidden behind that white piece of paper seemed to grow increasingly crazed.

This sword had truly been too powerful.

Worthy of being Su Li's.

As expected of a sword Su Li found worthy.

"Now this is a sword."

Xiao Zhang looked at him, not even attempting to conceal his admiration, or even adoration. "This sword is absolutely capable of injuring any one of us. Why use it on these degenerate pieces of trash?"

"Because I absolutely loathe this sort of fly. It's very annoying, so I might as well kill it to settle the matter. As for you and Liang Wangsun, I don't find you as annoying, so why do I need to kill you? Of course, the most important point is that over these past few weeks, I've only managed to hoard enough for this one strike."

Su Li continued, "If I could save up for two strikes so that I could simultaneously kill the two of you, then I would have naturally been more sparing."

Liang Wangsun was quiet for a few moments, and then said, "I will not receive your feelings."

Xiao Zhang commented, "Admirable, admirable."

People at this level would never say anything unnecessary. The two comments of "admirable" were naturally about two different matters.

He admired Su Li's sword.

He even more admired that Su Li had used his one strike to slay Lin Canghai and not used it on them.

This signified that to Su Li, happiness would forever be more important than things like repaying gratitude or taking revenge.

To live this way was truly meaningful.

# Chapter 390 - The Song Ends, The Blade Appears

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All the people in the streets of Xunyang City were shocked by Su Li's one strike. Even the insane Xiao Zhang was forced to express his admiration.

Chen Changsheng did not think this way. On the contrary, he felt somewhat saddened.

In the eyes of everyone else, Su Li's hand held the Yellow Paper Umbrella, and then with a single strike that flew through the rain, it had easily and silently slain a Star Condensation expert. This was truly a level of cultivation on the path of the sword that could shock the entire world.

But when he had gone from the Garden of Zhou to the snowy plains, he had once seen Su Li's true strike.

The Su Li of that time had similarly been holding the Yellow Paper Umbrella, the handle not fully pulled out. The sword intent flew through the stone, traveling dozens of li. A Demon General at the edge of the snowy plain collapsed from this strike, the black shadow of his mountainous figure suddenly being cut in two.

Compared to that Demon General, what did a rat like Lin Canghai amount to?

Compared to the strike from back then, what did this strike that

flew through the rain-soaked Xunyang City amount to?

As they had journeyed south over these past few weeks, Su Li had finally managed to save up enough for one strike. It fell short of even one-tenth of his power at his peak, and yet it still shook the heavens with its might. If he could return to his peak, no, even if he were just a little less injured, who could kill him? Who would even dare to come and kill him?

It was a pity that the human world only possessed cold, hard facts. There were never any 'if's.

After this strike, everything truly had come to an end.

"Has no one come?"

Su Li looked through the rain at Xunyang City, examining all the guests that had come to attend this feast. He was quiet for a very long time, and then he shook his head. He calmly said, "From the looks of it, no one else will be coming."

He had asked the question, and then answered it himself. Within this one question and one answer, there was an indescribable sense of frustration, a sense of someone who had lived through the many changes of the world.

His expression was still indifferent as usual. He said to Chen Changsheng, "You see, the facts have finally proved that I am right."

Chen Changsheng maintained his silence as he thought to himself, what's the point in continuing to argue about it?

Su Li's expression suddenly became more solemn, his tone very ponderous. "Besides an idiot—or maybe 'imbecile' would be better—like you, who would just randomly go help other people? Just where in the world can you find such people so deserving of trust?"

Even at this time, the Mount Li Sword Sect had still not sent anybody, nor even a message. The sects and monasteries of the Longevity Sect and the Holy Maiden Peak had also not said anything. True, the Southern Heaven was very far away, but words and attitudes should have been able to reach Xunyang City in time and appear before the common people. Somewhat sorrowfully, those words and attitudes did not appear.

Or perhaps this represented the entire human world's attitude towards Su Li.

That the world was not divided into north and south; that people were not divided into the virtuous and the foolish; that they all wanted him dead.

Watching the silent figure of Su Li in the rain, Chen Changsheng suddenly felt very sad. His nose felt somewhat sour, his eyes seemed to sting, and his voice was a little tense. "Maybe...maybe something happened at Mount Li."

For those people called legends, when the curtain finally fell,

they would often be alone. Yet Chen Changsheng could not stand to see this curtain. Whether in the folk stories or the annals of the Orthodoxy, he had never enjoyed reading the sentences about the breaking up of a feast. He did not want to see Su Li leave in such a miserable fashion.

Su Li smiled at him. "You idiot, is this supposed to comfort me?"

The rain-soaked Xunyang City was silent and chilly, and seemed to be getting colder. From far away abruptly rose the sound of a zither. No one knew who was playing the zither. Perhaps it was the house musicians of the Liang Household, or maybe it was Liang Hongzhuang's bosom friend. The zither sobbed and the voice was hoarse. One could faintly hear something like 'old soul' and 'old city' in there, but it wasn't all too clear.

Upon hearing this song, Liang Hongzhuang became silent. His torn dancing dress floated up in the wind and rain as he clasped his sleeves behind him and left.

Leading away his Red Cloud Qilin, Xue He silently bowed to the second floor of the inn, and then turned to leave.

The sound of the zither gradually faded away, the voice of the singer slowly disappeared, and then...

"Eeyah!"

Xiao Zhang roared!

The white paper obscuring his face whooshed!

The metal spear thrust straight at Su Li!

Liang Wangsun grasped the Vajra Pestle in his hand, his steps as heavy as a lotus and his spirit complete like jade. His Qi enveloped the entire inn.

With a sudden gale, Chen Changsheng was flipped over and found it hard to get up.

This song was about to end.

That would be the time of Su Li's death.

And yet, there was someone who was not willing to let this song end.

It was not Liang Hongzhuang in his torn dress who had turned to leave.

It was not Divine General Xue He in his damaged old armor, leading his Qilin away.

It wasn't the Liang Household's musicians that wanted to keep playing, nor was it that bosom friend who wanted the song to reach to the ends of the world.

That zither, that voice, had already ceased. Yet within the inn, or more precisely the first floor of the inn, there was a crisp clack. It was like the sound of wood striking or a bamboo zither. In brief, it continued this zither song. These crisp clacks were in abundance, beating out a fast tempo as if they were giving new life to this song.

At both ends of the long street, Liang Hongzhuang and Xue He simultaneously halted their steps. They swiftly turned their bodies to the inn, their faces pale from shock.

Clack!

Clackclack!

Clackclackclack!

Just what object was making this noise?

The counter on the first floor of the inn was very old, its paint peeling off. Atop it was an abacus.

The beads of the abacus were at this very moment ramming against each other.

Yet the person who had been moving these beads around to calculate was no longer there.

With a sharp clack, dozens of white and turbulent streams of air appeared in the ruins of the inn.

Seeing these streams of turbulent air, Liang Wangsun's face grew solemn. His princely robe whistled upwards and his two eyes glowed like stars. Xiao Zhang's expression instantly became incomparably shocked, and then turned into violence.

With a rip, the floorboards between the first and second floor were torn apart like a fragile piece of paper. A blade slashed through the floorboards, flying through those dozens of masses of air. With a terrifying screech, it slashed at Xiao Zhang!

Xiao Zhang had appeared in an unbridled manner, but this blade was even more unbridled than he had been. Because this blade had no intention of blocking that spear, but was aimed at the person behind the spear. This clearly said to Xiao Zhang, my blade is definitely faster, heavier, and crueler than your spear. Before your spear can kill Su Li, my blade will definitely cut your head off!

Seeing this metal blade that was slashing at him head-on, Xiao Zhang was shocked, and then furious.

He knew this blade. He knew that this blade had been personally forged by the Old Master of the Wenshui Tangs, and then gifted free of charge. He knew especially that although this blade looked ordinary, it possessed a might which even spirits and ghosts would find hard to resist.

The blade sobbed like the weeping of a poverty-stricken scholar,

like the wailing of a child in the wreckage of its home.

This blade was very angry.

Xiao Zhang had exchanged countless blows with this blade. After Xun Mei entered the Mausoleum of Books, the person that had battled this metal blade the most times was him. Of course, he had also lost to it the most times. But he had never seen the blade this terrifying.

A hole also seemed to be cut open in the dark clouds above Xunyang City, and one could faintly make out the blue sky.

Xiao Zhang knew he absolutely could not retreat, or else he would definitely lose to this blade. This angry blade might even cut his Dao heart and battle intent into pieces, turning him into a cripple for the rest of his life. His two hands tightly gripped his spear, and then swung it horizontally towards the blade.

Boom!

The white paper floated up into the air. Some blood had spattered upon the paper.

Xiao Zhang flew backwards, spitting blood. He crashed into the courtyard across from the inn.

From the clouds of dust and shattered stone came a furious and unwilling roar.

"Wang Po, you would actually launch a sneak attack!?"

# Chapter 392 - What A Fine Wang Po Of Tianliang (II)

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Several decades ago, a young man came out of Tianliang County. His name was Wang Po.

The day he appeared, the era of blooming flowers in the world of cultivation formally began.

He was a genius in cultivating the Dao, and also a genius in battle. Whether in cultivating talent or battle prowess, amongst cultivators of the same generation, he had always been the strongest. After Zhou Dufu, he was the only person to surpass the rest of his generation's cultivators and was undoubtedly the strongest expert. From the Proclamation of Azure Sky to the Proclamation of Golden Distinction, and then the Proclamation of Liberation, he had always occupied first place. Compared to the present-day Qiushan Jun and Xu Yourong, he was even grander. Even cultivators of such privileged positions as Snow-treading Xun Mei who once obtained first rank on the first banner in the Grand Examination, or Liang Wangsun who was the successor of a noble family that had accumulated power for a thousand years and one dynasty, found it hard to catch up. It was even because of Wang Po that Xun Mei spent thirty-odd years bitterly cultivating in the Mausoleum of Books without leaving. Because the proud and insane Painted Armor Xiao Zhang wanted to surpass Wang Po, he was even willing to descend into madness and almost became a cripple.

Nowadays, he had already cultivated to the peak of Star Condensation. Below the Five Saints and Storms of the Eight

Directions, besides the legends of the previous generation like Su Li, the peerless expert who wandered the world, or Divine General Han Qing, there was no one stronger than him. And it must not be forgotten that he had only begun to cultivate several decades ago. The human world was optimistic that he could enter the Saint realm and become a Saint of the next generation or perhaps take over one of the positions in the Eight Storms. There was even the high possibility that he could go even farther and enter the legendary realm of Concealed Divinity!

A deathly stillness hung over the streets.

The crowd looked at the blue-clothed middle-aged man standing in the ruins of the inn, not daring to make a noise. At one end of the long street, Liang Hongzhuang's face was abnormally complex as he thought about matters from the past. On his charming complexion that was not at all like a man's, several unhealthy smears of red had appeared. It was obvious that his mind was excessively agitated. At the other end of the long street, Divine General Xue He looked at the blade he was holding casually in his hand and thought of those words Su Li had said to him a few days ago, and in his heart grew an unsurpassable sense of defeat.

Back then, Xue He had asked Su Li for guidance. Why did everyone believe that it would be impossible for him to catch up to Wang Po? Su Li told him that Wang Po was too far away from him, in matters of both the blade and the person. He asked for the reason, and Su Li said, "Because you use seven blades, while Wang Po only uses one." This answer made him somewhat comprehend and feel that he had understood, but now in that previous moment, when he saw the blade in Wang Po's hand send Xiao Zhang flying twice and cause the walls and courtyards of Xunyang

City to collapse, he finally understood that Su Li's answer had just been lip service.

He was inferior to Wang Po, and it had nothing to do with how many blades he used. Even if Wang Po wanted to used three hundred and sixty-five blades, every day using a different blade, Xue He would still be inferior to Wang Po. The distance between him and Wang Po was too vast, and it had nothing to do with perseverance or willpower. It only had to do with talent. This sort of acknowledgment brought him a great deal of despair and sadness.

Right as Liang Hongzhuang and Xue He were about to leave, Wang Po's appearance dealt them an enormous psychological blow. It had also placed a massive pressure on all of Xunyang City, especially those people that wanted to kill Su Li, creating a deathly stillness. It was only Chen Changsheng who, in his shock, felt a boundless warmth.

Yes, it was not ecstasy, but warmth.

Ecstasy was often a shocked happiness, coming from something unimaginable. Warmth was more mild, more profound, and more lingering. It was gratification that arose from the perfect match of one's desires and reality. He did not know why Wang Po would appear in Xunyang City, but he was grateful for Wang Po's appearance. He thanked him on the behalf of Su Li and on his own behalf, and on the behalf of those naive and pure ways of thinking.

At this moment, Wang Po's body slightly swayed, and then he began to cough.

He coughed blood, and every mouthful of blood was filled with spirit and boldness.

Everyone could tell that with a single cough, he became much more exhausted and haggard. Even for Wang Po, when confronting opponents on the level of Xiao Zhang and Liang Wangsun, especially in a one-on-two situation, it was very difficult to speak of certain victory. Wanting his one blade to push back the enemy, he had used his most unyielding technique and had even suffered injuries that he should not have suffered.

A breeze blew through the ruins of the inn. The white paper on Xiao Zhang's head flapped in the breeze, but it was impossible to dispel the bewilderment in Xiao Zhang's eyes. Liang Wangsun was unprecedentedly solemn and simultaneously intensely shocked and confused. In the battle, Xiao Zhang and Liang Wangsun had both exclaimed—they thought Wang Po had gone mad.

They were all on the Proclamation of Liberation and since they had been youths, they often exchanged pointers. They were both actually very familiar with Wang Po. They understood Wang Po's temperament, Wang Po's cultivation level, Wang Po's faction, Wang Po's likes and dislikes, and Wang Po's style and behavior. They knew that although Wang Po held half ownership of Scholartree Manor, he had never thought himself to be a southerner. In addition, it was impossible for Wang Po to have a single iota of good will towards Mount Li. Crucially, Wang Po did not like Su Li—Su Li was too carefree, like a cloud. On the other hand, Wang Po was too disciplined, like an account book that had been flipped through innumerable times. Why would he save Su Li?

They were all peak Star Condensation experts. Both of them had a clear understanding of what point Wang Po had cultivated to. Of course, Wang Po was outrageously strong, but there was absolutely no way he could defeat their alliance in such an understated fashion and inflict injuries which would be impossible to recover from in such a short amount of time. The only possibility was that Wang Po had used his most unyielding technique and had suffered heavy injuries of his own.

The injuries that Xiao Zhang and Liang Wangsun had suffered had also not been light. They no longer had the strength to battle while Wang Po still seemed to have some surplus strength. In reality, he had paid an even heavier price than they had, and had even possibly affected his future cultivation. Why? Why was his resolve so unshakable, why was he willing to pay any price? Why was he willing to pay such a great price for a single southerner?

"Why do you want to save him?" The white paper was speckled with blood reminiscent of plum blossoms. When the bloodied white paper was contrasted with Xiao Zhang's eyes, it made them seem even more bloody and dreadful. He unwaveringly fixed his eyes on Wang Po as he felt the destruction wreaked upon his meridians by the true essence. His voice was hoarse as he shouted his question, angry and uncomprehending.

Wang Po was rather exhausted, and the ends of his eyebrows drooped down even more. As a result, he seemed even more impoverished. Paired with his blue garments that had been washed so much that they had started to lose color, he really did seem just like a normal accountant for an inn. He asked a question back to Xiao Zhang: "Why do you want to kill him?"

Xiao Zhang did not pretend to think. Righteously and self-confidently, even heroically, he answered, "Because he upsets me."

Wang Po was silent for a few moments, and then, paying no more attention to this madman, he turned to Liang Wangsun.

Liang Wangsun's face was pale, but his dim eyes gradually began to glow. "There exists animosity between the two of us."

This was a calm and powerful reason.

Wang Po said, "Let's not fight for a moment."

Liang Wangsun replied, "I must fight for every moment."

Wang Po answered, "It does not conform with justice."

Liang Wangsun rebutted, "Your justice is not my justice."

Wang Po replied, "Justice, and also great profit."

Liang Wangsun said no more.

Wang Po turned back to Xiao Zhang and looked at those eyes behind the white paper. "He upsets you, so you came to kill him. Your killing him upsets me, so I won't let you kill him."

Just like Su Li's answer to Chen Changsheng, many things in this world were just this simple.

As expected, Wang Po of Tianliang was not simple.

(TN: 不简单 can mean 'not simple', but it can also mean 'remarkable'.)

# Chapter 393 - A Storm Blockades The City

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The long street was absolutely silent. The several hundred people present actually did not make a single sound.

Standing in the inn, Chen Changsheng shot a glance at Hua Jiefu. Previously, this bishop of Xunyang City had warned that a powerful figure from Scholartree Manor was touring the north and that there was a chance that this would become a big problem.

Now that he looked at it, the Orthodoxy really was the greatest power on the continent, for them to even be able to accurately sense this sort of secret intelligence. It was just that the bishop had guessed wrong. That person was not problematic, and apart from this...Su Li had also been wrong.

Chen Changsheng looked at Wang Po's back and said to Su Li, "You see, in the end, there's still someone that's willing to help you. This world isn't always dark, it's worthy of your trust!"

Wang Po stood in the drizzling rain like a lonely tree. He had repelled Liang Wangsun and Xiao Zhang, using his incomparably unyielding technique to slash at them until they had no more strength to battle. For this reason, he had also suffered heavy injuries and coughed blood, so his voice was somewhat weak.

"Let's go," he directly said, without turning around.

Chen Changsheng knew these words were for him. He helped Su Li up from the chair and followed Wang Po. They tentatively

stepped through the shattered beams and crushed rocks, heading towards the street.

Su Li thought that walking this way was rather arduous. Crucially, he needed Chen Changsheng's support. He could not walk freely and casually, and he even had to do this under the watch of several hundred people. This was dealing a critical blow to his legendary character.

"Before we entered the city, I told you that there was no need to get rid of those two furry deer so quickly, but you didn't listen!"

Annoyed, he grumbled back at Chen Changsheng, "I don't care, just quickly find me a mount."

Chen Changsheng felt very helpless. At this time, where would he find a mount? He said, "Wait until after we leave the city."

Su Li pointed towards the end of the street at the Red Cloud Qilin that Xue He was leading. "This animal's not bad, it can fly."

Chen Changsheng thought to himself, the entire continent knows that it's not bad, but the problem is that it's not yours, nor is it mine. Moreover, it's the mount of a Divine General of the Great Zhou who constantly thinks about killing you. Why are you doing this sort of thing and not quickly leaving Xunyang City?

Su Li saw the expression on his face and reluctantly said, "If it's really not okay, then the emperor's carriage of the Liang

Household is also fine."

Chen Changsheng was silent. He thought to himself that he really had done wrong. Back then on the snowy ridge at that hot spring, he shouldn't have gone back. As the two talked, Wang Po waited silently in front of them, seeming extremely patient. Suddenly, he turned around and walked into the crowd. Coming to a certain cultivator, he extended his right hand—that cultivator was leading a buckskin horse.

With a stamping of hooves, Wang Po led the horse back and put the reins in Chen Changsheng's hands. This done, he turned and continued to head down the long street while carrying his blade. Looking at his back, Chen Changsheng was slightly astonished. He hadn't thought that Wang Po would also be so interesting.

He seemed like an impoverished accountant, but he was a very interesting impoverished accountant.

"Wang Po is a very interesting person. Back then when he was working as an accountant in Wenshui City, I already thought very highly of him, it's just...his eyebrows are far too long. He looks too destitute, too distressed."

After Su Li mounted the horse, his mood improved greatly, becoming more inclined to chat about old times. Pointing in front of them at Wang Po, he said, "If he could look just a little better, I would definitely have looked upon him more favorably."

Wang Po heard these words and his steps momentarily paused,

then began moving forward again. As he broke through the puddles of water on the street, the rain falling from the sky gradually began to come to a halt. In the distance, the sky began to reveal an azure color.

This feast at Xunyang City had many guests. Painted Armor Xiao Zhang and Liang Wangsun, members of the Proclamation of Liberation, had come, as well as many other powers. Now that this feast was about to come to a close, there were still many guests that were unwilling to leave.

Those people had blood feuds with Su Li, old grudges that could not be resolved.

Wang Po's blade could force back Xiao Zhang and Liang Wangsun, but it couldn't intimidate the human heart. Since those people had come to kill Su Li and had already put death out of their minds, since they did not even fear death, they would naturally not fear Wang Po.

The gray stones of the street had been soaked by the rain, transforming them into black ink stones. On the sides of the street stood many people.

Wang Po carried his blade in front while Chen Changsheng held the reins behind. Drip drop drip drop—this was the sound of rain dripping from the eaves, and it was also the sound of blood dripping down, and that of the heart beating.

The gazes of the crowd were very complex: reverential, fearful,

angry, unwilling.

The expression on Wang Po's face did not change. Chen Changsheng looked down at his feet. Su Li continued to gaze upwards, carefree to the utmost. In the eyes of his enemies, he was naturally exceptionally detestable.

There was some person that could no longer hold themselves back. Rushing into the middle of the street, the person shouted, "Su Li, come pay with your life!"

Chen Changsheng remained silent, his left hand already tightening his grip on the dagger. Su Li continued to stare at the sky, not caring in the least.

On this journey from the snowy plains to the south, over the course of tens of thousands of li, the pair had already encountered far too many sneak attacks. Now, their group heading south had one more person. Going from two to three people, they would naturally be even less worried.

A swift and fierce, yet calm blade intent rose up. With a thud, before that person even had a chance to rush to the center of the street, he was sent flying back. He crashed against a wall and fell unconscious in a cloud of dust.

Another person arrived and again was sent flying back by the metal blade. Flying figures could be seen all along this long street of Xunyang City, as well as disgorged blood, smothered and miserable cries, and pained and desperate shouts.

Wang Po wielded his blade as he continued forward. He seemed to very casually strike out with his blade, but not a single person was able to overcome it and get closer to Su Li, whether it was that northern initial level Star Condensation expert or a genius from some sect.

From start to finish, he did not use the edge of the blade, so no one died.

Both sides of the street were covered with the collapsed bodies of cultivators struggling to get up.

This was as expected of the strongest member of the Proclamation of Liberation.

Besides a Saint personally coming or one of the Storms of the Eight Directions appearing, who could block Wang Po of Tianliang?

Chen Changsheng still tightly clenched the hilt of his dagger, silent and wary.

His gaze did not stop on Wang Po's body, nor did it rest upon that metal blade that flitted about as unpredictably as a ghost, even though he knew that this was a learning opportunity that was very hard to come by. Rather, his gaze was always watching those places on the street that were very easy to miss.

The broken wall, the hanging eave, the wounded cultivator, the scolded youth.

Even though they were on the verge of leaving Xunyang City, this was actually the most dangerous period.

He had never once forgotten that assassin who had always remained hidden in the darkness.

The world's third-ranked assassin that had already silently followed him and Su Li for several thousand li, whose patience was so strong that it would make people tremble.

That assassin with the extremely ordinary name: Liu Qing.

He felt that Liu Qing would attack.

Wang Po had already arrived. If Liu Qing did not take advantage of this final chaos in Xunyang City to attack, then once they left Xunyang City, it was highly likely that Liu Qing would not find another opportunity. In the end, he would be like Su Li, forcing himself into the most awkward of circumstances.

The end of Xunyang City gradually grew closer. After turning the corner ahead, they would be able to see the tightly-shut city gate.

At this moment, Liang Wangsun said a few words.

From the moment they left the inn, Liang Wangsun had followed them.

He was already without the strength to attack, and yet he was unwilling to leave.

He wanted to see if Su Li would continue to live—to see if today, after all was said and done, Su Li would be able to open his eyes once more.

He said to Wang Po, "Although the heavens are vast, there is already no place where Su Li can take shelter. Just where are you thinking of taking him?"

Wang Po stopped.

The buckskin horse stopped.

Wang Po turned around and looked at him, then replied, "I will return him to Mount Li."

Chen Changsheng had brought Su Li several tens of thousands of li.

So why shouldn't he take Su Li several more tens of thousands of li and go back with him to Mount Li?

"But...even if you bring him back to Mount Li, what meaning will

it have?"

From one side of the long street came an indifferent voice.

Chen Changsheng thought, right, if Mount Li really did change, what could Su Li do even if he did return to Mount Li?

Could it be that even though the world is so huge, there really is no place for him?

Then, he suddenly sobered up and turned to the place where the voice had come from.

Who had said those words?

Wang Po's expression became extremely grave, solemn and speechless.

He was very vigilant, countless times more vigilant than he had been when facing off against the combined might of Xiao Zhang and Liang Wangsun.

Seeing the speaker slowly emerging from the corner of the road, Chen Changsheng felt his body become extremely cold.

It can't be.

He silently thought in his heart.

Suddenly, he became furious beyond belief.

Stories should not have this sort of ending.

In a feast to devour a man, for what reason should it conclude at the host's desire?

Wrath came from helplessness.

Chen Changsheng truly felt very helpless, because he had truly fallen into despair.

Whether he was facing Xue He and Liang Hongzhuang in the wilderness or seeing the Liang Household's emperor's carriage appear, he had never despaired. Even when facing off against Xiao Zhang's spear while he didn't even have the strength to lift his dagger, he did not despair.

Because he was still alive and Su Li was still alive, and he believed that there was absolutely someone in the world that would come to help them.

When he shouted out those four words into the lovely spring sunshine of Xunyang City, he knew that there would definitely be an echo.

Sure enough, Wang Po had come.

He had bullied the wind and tread on the rain to come.

Yet now, this person...had actually also come.

An even more brilliant and lovely spring sunshine would eventually fade away.

An ever-constant echo would also eventually dissipate.

Even if there were still people willing to help them, what use would it be?

Was there still anyone that could help them?

The person that appeared at the corner of the street was a middle-aged man.

The man's long hair trailed over his shoulders, but within, one could faintly make out vestiges of white.

So much so that it was impossible to tell just how long he had lived, how many years he had cultivated.

Several decades or several centuries?

That person was very tall and very thin.

His bearing was out of the ordinary, confident and relaxed beyond compare, because he was the head of an aristocratic family.

His expression was very cold, because he was the Sect Master of the World-Severing Sect who had severed his emotions and destroyed his character.

As he looked at Wang Po and Chen Changsheng, he possessed a tyrannical and aloof manner.

Even when he looked at Su Li, he did not conceal his self-confidence and arrogance.

A name moves the eight directions, a storm darkens the skies.

The person who had come was precisely one of the Storms of the Eight Directions.

Zhu Luo.

He was one of the supreme experts of the continent.

He was a god of the cultivation world.

An absolute silence hung over the long street of Xunyang City,

then suddenly there were countless noises.

Several hundred cultivators prostrated themselves.

Liang Wangsun clasped his hands and bowed.

The white paper on Xiao Zhang's face moved.

Wang Po did not move and he did not bow. He calmly looked at Zhu Luo.

Chen Changsheng did not bow. He had forgotten to bow.

Su Li sat on the back of the horse, looking down from up high.

He looked at Zhu Luo and said, "You old farts finally couldn't help yourselves."

Zhu Luo replied, "It was just that I couldn't bear to personally kill you, so I didn't want to meet you."

Su Li was quiet for a while, and then sighed. "From the looks of it, my thinking was really on point."

Zhu Luo asked, "What did you think?"

Su Li looked at him and sincerely declared, "You lot are all

bastards, old bastards."

# Chapter 394 - Three Pines (I)

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Zhu Luo was one of the Storms of the Eight Directions and rarely appeared before the common people, but today, he had to come. In addition, the fact of the matter was that his appearance was not at all a surprise to Wang Po or these cultivators in Xunyang City. What sort of person was Su Li? In order to kill him, Black Robe had not hesitated to weave the Garden of Zhou into his plot and the demons had arrayed a massive force in the wastelands in front of Xuelao City. Now the human world similarly wanted to kill him, so how could those random assassins and Xue He and Liang Hongzhuang, this sort of class of expert, possibly be enough?

Even after adding on these several hundred cultivators in Xunyang City, as well as Wang Po, Xiao Zhang, and Liang Wangsun, these strongest members of their generation, it still would not be enough. Whether to send him off or treat his soul, when a historic event like the death of Su Li was concerned, even if Saints like the Divine Empress and the Pope could not appear, the Storms of the Eight Directions had to be on the scene no matter what.

The godlike Zhu Luo had descended from the heavens, to come to this noisy and disorderly secular world and appear in Xunyang City on the end of the long street, for precisely this reason: he had come to kill Su Li. Thinking about that pavilion outside the forest on the outskirts of Hanqiu City, remembering the transcendent figure of that man with his long hair trailing over his shoulders, Chen Changsheng felt very unwell. But when he heard Su Li's words, he understood. They were all people that lived in the world. How could there possibly exist such transcendent figures who dined in the wind and slept with the stars, who did not consume the food of regular mortals?

Since they were worldly people, they would inevitably do terrible things, whether on their own volition or by force. Chen Changsheng silently looked at Zhu Luo's indifferent face and remembered something Tang Thirty-Six had once said under the Orthodox Academy's banyan tree. There is no person whose moral character will improve with age. In the vast majority of cases, a young sucker would turn into an old sucker—old bastards, old suckers. These were all filthy words, but when said at this moment, they seemed to have much more substance. Chen Changsheng would not say these profane words, but when he looked down the street at Zhu Luo, he couldn't help but think about them.

His feeling was not wrong. The present Zhu Luo was no longer that transcendent figure under the pavilion, cold and elusive, nor was he that human brave who, several hundred years ago under the light of the moon, slew the second-ranked Demon General in one strike. The present Zhu Luo was a leader of an aristocratic family, a powerful influence in the Great Zhou, an expert of the continent, and a man. A normal man.

A normal man who could kill another for his own self-interest.

After Wang Po finished his bow, he calmly stood in front of Su Li and Chen Changsheng. He said nothing and did nothing, so naturally he also had no intention of giving way. He hadn't even sheathed the blade in his hand. To face this member of the Eight Storms whose generation, status, and strength was far above his with such silence and inaction was very disrespectful.

Zhu Luo said to him, "I didn't want to appear, but you forced me to."

This was talking about Wang Po's seemingly calm, but actually crazed, blade strike which, by paying a disastrous price in the future, had heavily injured Xiao Zhang and Liang Wangsun. Afterwards, it had continuously broken through Xunyang's crowd of heroes and was about to take Su Li out of the city before everyone's eyes. If Zhu Luo had not appeared, perhaps Wang Po really could have gone against the general trend of the human world and helped Su Li survive.

Given Zhu Luo's status in the human world, these words he said to Wang Po were extremely high recognition, even though he said the words without the slightest expression on his face. Of course, recognition was not praise, let alone appreciation. To be more precise, Zhu Luo used these words to clearly and unhappily indicate to Wang Po what he had appreciated and not appreciated.

Saying these words, he turned to Chen Changsheng and yelled, "His Holiness is in the Li Palace, sick in the heart and deeply worried. Your teachers and friends are concerned for your safety, and millions of people in the capital are praying for you, hoping that you are alive. It turns out that you're alive, but you've delayed so long on the road. Just what are you thinking about? Don't tell me you don't plan to go back?"

Compared to the tone he had when speaking to Wang Po, Zhu Luo's tone was even more discourteous. Although Chen Changsheng was the Principal of the Orthodox Academy, he was still too young. Moreover, through Mei Lisha, he felt that he truly

was Chen Changsheng's elder, so he was naturally somewhat harsh. The last sentence was actually very close to lecturing and scolding.

Chen Changsheng said nothing, but it wasn't because he didn't have the face to see his teachers in the capital, nor was it because he felt shame from the lecturing of his elder. Rather, he was still very angry and thought that if he opened his mouth to refute, it would seem like he wasn't giving proper respect to his senior. Wang Po also said nothing because he felt that there was no need to say anything. He required no one's appreciation, even if that person was Zhu Luo.

The street was completely silent. No one dared to say anything.

From the moment Zhu Luo appeared, besides Su Li's carefree voice, the entirety of Xunyang City could only hear Zhu Luo's voice. The Storms of the Eight Directions were supreme experts, not just in Xunyang City but the entire continent, so even when he spoke indifferently, his voice still rumbled like the spring thunder. The entire world absolutely had to carefully listen. Yet this was to say nothing of the fact that his appearance today on this street in Xunyang City also represented the collective will of the Great Zhou Imperial Court. He who had a close relationship to the Chen Imperial clan had clearly long since reached some sort of agreement with the Divine Empress and the Orthodoxy.

The Divine Empress, the Li Palace, and Zhu Luo—these were the three great mountains of the Great Zhou Dynasty. In the mountains where Chen Changsheng had grown up, there were some young pines that, because of their position, received great

respect and status. But now, he wanted to resist the will of this great mountain at his feet while at the same time resisting the shadow of another great mountain. Just what could he do?

He looked at Wang Po. As Wang Po's tall and thin body lightly rocked in the chilly wind, he really did seem like a healthy and sturdy pine. It still had not grown thick enough that it could resist a bolt of lightning, but at the very least, it would not be blown about every which way and deformed by the wind. Zhu Luo had come, but he did not fall on his knees, did not give way, and did not retreat. His head was slightly lowered by the wind as he silently thought about something.

And yet, these things had no meaning.

He was the supreme expert of the Middle generation and top of the Proclamation of Liberation, but he could not possibly measure up to Zhu Luo.

Zhu Luo was a Storm of the Eight Directions, a person that had already stepped into the Divine Domain.

In the present Xunyang City, and in the entire continent, there was only one person besides them that dared to directly stare at, or even ignore, the Five Saints and the Storms of the Eight Directions.

Su Li made no attempt to conceal his disdain and scorn. "Is the only thing you old farts can do now to scare children?"

This was speaking of the difference in the two sentences Zhu Luo had said to Wang Po and Chen Changsheng. Not waiting for Zhu Luo's reply, Su Li perked his eyebrows and he said a few more words.

"I know that you lot really want me dead...you've wanted me dead for many years now, no matter if it's the Divination Elder or you. This is because even when I was really young, you lot already couldn't kill me, so you wanted to kill me even more. On a similar basis, I think that you actually really want Wang Po to attack, so then you have a good pretext to kill him?"

These words were very critical, so the entire street was very quiet.

The crowd could only pretend that they had not heard these words, and even Wang Po himself did not show any reaction.

Zhu Luo was expressionless and said nothing.

"As I got stronger and stronger, you wanted me dead more and more."

Su Li sighed, "Tianhai, the Bai Xingye couple, you eight old good-for-nothings, and now even Old man Yin wants me dead..."

The Five Saints and the Storms of the Eight Directions: besides Su Li, this continent had thirteen supreme experts.

At this point, he had counted twelve names. He accused these godlike existences of attempting to assassinate him.

"I'm not at all in a bad mood, because I've never had any interest in standing together with you guys in the Divine Kingdom."

He curled his lip and finally said, "It's just that I'm a bit regretful. Back then, I should just have killed off you eight good-for-nothings and saved the discussion for later."

# Chapter 395 - Three Pines (II)

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As people of virtue and prestige in the human world, the Storms of the Eight Directions were like gods in the eyes of the common people. In the mouth of Su Li, they were eight good-for-nothings, and it couldn't be forgotten that at the very beginning, he had said that Zhu Luo was an old bastard. This was nothing much, but from the tone of his voice, it seemed like he had the ability to slay every one of the continent's supreme experts. This was truly too arrogant and conceited, even if he was the legendary Junior Martial Uncle of Mount Li. All the people present who heard these words still felt that it was too excessive, even preposterous.

Zhu Luo's face did not show any derision that might have arisen from this absurdity, nor was there any anger. It was still indifferent. As the sect master of the World-Severing Sect, his Dao heart had severed emotion and destroyed his nature. This did not mean he was brutal and callous, but rather that he was like the bright moon shining over the snowy plains, lonely and pure, cold and absolute, not confused by external things.

He looked at Su Li and declared, "You no longer have the opportunity."

Yes, Su Li was about to die. Regardless of whether at his peak he had the ability to slay the Storms of the Eight Directions and even menace the Five Saints, he was on the verge of leaving this world. The result of a now-impossible scenario could only remain a mystery that would vanish in the long river of history.

But Su Li did not think this way. He looked at Zhu Luo and said,

"Wait until after I recover from my injuries. The first thing I'll do is go to Hanqiu City and kill you."

He had said these words very casually and indifferently, as if he wasn't even aware that Zhu Luo had come to kill him, as if he didn't know that Xunyang City would be where his body would be buried, as if he would be returning to Mount Li in the next moment.

The long hair draped over Zhu Luo's shoulders wafted in the breeze, and his brows rose up at the same time. Finally, a hint of derision appeared.

"That's wrong, I shouldn't be going to Hanqiu City to kill you... rather I should go to Hanqiu City to kill your entire family."

Su Li corrected himself. Then he turned to Liang Wangsun, who was at the head of the crowd, and said, "This time, I will draw upon my past experiences to teach you not to make these mistakes again."

"Senior, this way of doing things is wrong."

Chen Changsheng was holding the reins. He turned his head to Su Li and said these words. Yes, such a thing as killing a person's entire family truly was wrong. Even cutting the grass and leaving the roots meant that there was a possibility that there would someday be a giant wildfire.

Over the course of their journey south, Su Li thought that he had obtained a very good understanding of this little kid called Chen Changsheng. But now, he realized that he had not completely understood him. After a moment of silence, he laughed and said, "Then I won't kill his entire family, just him."

This seemed just like a joke, but in reality, it had always been a joke.

Su Li was about to die, yet he was speaking about how in the future he would go kill Zhu Luo's entire family. How could he even have a future?

Zhu Luo looked at him and solemnly said, "When you're about to leave the world, can't you just act serious for once?"

Previously, the bishop of Xunyang City, Hua Jiefu, had said something similar to Chen Changsheng.

"Calmly welcoming death is acting serious? Then I don't like acting serious. Given a choice to die on the battlefield in the endless mountains or die comfortably in bed in the bosom of a beauty, I would definitely choose the latter."

Su Li continued, "Now that I mention it, I really don't understand what you old fools continue to live for...if it's about profit, then I can't really see how much profit you'll make from this. It looks to me that you're also in a rather miserable situation. After all, this is Tianliang County...those old fools can hide in their own caves, but in the capital, you can't hide anywhere."

Zhu Luo was silent for a few moments, then said, "There are some matters that must be resolved."

From beginning to end, this powerful figure of Tianliang County, this man of virtue and prestige, had no intention of appearing in Xunyang City. Because he was unwilling to personally kill Su Li; at the very least, his two hands could not be stained in Su Li's blood.

That was until Wang Po appeared, his blade cleaved through the snowy sky, and the crowd of heroes was forced to retreat. Now he was compelled to appear.

Su Li said mockingly to him, "Then did you ever think about how you would resolve future problems? There are many people in the south that want me dead, but no matter how you look at it, I'm also an idol in the south. If your hands are stained with my blood, then your Zhu family and the World-Severing Sect will bear the anger of the southerners. Have you mentally prepared yourself for that?"

Zhu Luo said nothing. For a person like him, his Dao heart was incapable of being darkened by worldly affairs. How could he possibly have failed to weigh the situation? But it was precisely as he said: since this matter occurred in Tianliang County, he was forced to come and resolve it.

"Even though you've lived for several centuries, in the end, you were still used by other people as a blade."

Su Li looked at him sympathetically. "How could your mother give birth to such an idiot? Once your father in the underworld learns that your decision today will lead to the gradual downfall of the Zhu family, will he regret giving birth to such an idiot?"

His speech was incisive and ear-piercing, every word condemning, but it wasn't because these words were filthy—rather, because they struck true. Words that were true were like swords. With Su Li's skill, even if Zhu Luo's Dao heart was as fixed as a boulder, there would still be some marks left behind.

Zhu Luo looked upon the feeble man on the horse, so weak that he could barely lift his arms anymore. "The torrential great river is divided into two shores. Even if you look and don't speak, you still have to pick a side."

This was speaking about Su Li, about why the entire continent wanted to kill Su Li.

Roughly ten years ago, after the bloody case of the Orthodox Academy, the Great Zhou was in internal upheaval. The Longevity Sect joined hands with the Liang Household and had intentions of invading the north. But Su Li was unwilling to allow this, so much so that he used the one sword in his hand to completely destroy the entire plot. Over the past hundred-odd years, the Tianhai Divine Empress and the Pope both wanted to unite the north and the south. But Su Li objected. Relying on the one sword in his hand, he stood in front of the south and made it impossible for the great powers to advance.

In these two matters, regardless of what Su Li chose, he had

never mired himself in any perilous situation. Then on the contrary, it was like he had never chosen at all. His attitude was extremely proud and clear: "I am like a firm rock, standing in the center of the great river. I am like duckweed, letting the water pass over me. I am Su Li; for what reason should I choose a shore?"

Zhu Luo decided to conclude his words. "Mount Li will continue to exist, but it will be without you."

This was respect, and also a proclamation.

The streets of Xunyang City were absolutely silent. Dark clouds gradually gathered and raindrops once again began to slowly drip down.

"Is a Mount Li without me still Mount Li?"

Su Li expressionlessly looked south, thinking about what could be happening in Mount Li at this very moment, his heart heavy.

This was no haughty declaration, but concern.

The entire continent took Su Li to be Mount Li, but he himself did not actually think this way. Ever since he entered the Mount Li Sword Sect as a child, he understood that Mount Li possessed the soul and spirit of a sword. But the fact was that over the last several centuries, he had become that young pine at the peak of Mount Li, offering shade and protection to the disciples of Mount Li Sword Sect. If he was no more, what would happen to Mount

Li? There must be something happening in Mount Li, but what? Could the disciples of Mount Li hold on? This was the only thing he was currently concerned about.

"In the end, I'm still no match for Black Robe...in this aspect."

Su Li drew back his gaze and turned to Zhu Luo. "Although he hasn't killed as many people as me, he actually knows far more about the dark side of human nature than I do. The divine realm still surges with the red dust of the mortal realm, and he understands very well the hearts of you guardians of the human world, but do you all clearly understand just what it is you're doing?"

Zhu Luo replied, "There are times when the river of history must pull back before it has enough power to push forward."

"To resist external threats, one must first stabilize within?" Su Li looked at him and sneered. "Then won't it be fine if you advise those people in the Chen Imperial clan to stop thinking about becoming emperor? Or perhaps you can go advise Tianhai to voluntarily abdicate?"

Zhu Luo was silent, then he recited a line from a classic of the Daoist scriptures, layered with deep meaning.

"I really detest this mysterious and divine behavior you guys like to put on."

Su Li simply did not care about how profound the truth contained within this part of the Daoist Canon was. "It's really no fun."

"It truly is no fun."

Xiao Zhang, who had not spoken all his time, fiercely shook his head. The white paper over his face which had been soaked by the rain flopped around, sounding like someone being slapped. Xiao Zhang then turned around, his spear on his back, and began walking towards the other end of the street.

He had come to Xunyang City to kill Su Li. Now someone had come to kill Su Li and Su Li was certain to die, so why should he stick around? To kill a person like Su Li was still rather meaningful, even if he was so heavily injured that he couldn't strike back, but to see him die was not very fun.

Liang Wangsun did not leave, nor did those several hundred other cultivators. They stood in the increasingly heavy rain, silently watching those people on the street. They wanted to wait and see how Su Li would die.

Su Li caressed the wet hair of the fine horse he sat on, then said, "You all can go now."

These words were obviously aimed at Chen Changsheng and Wang Po. Although he detested such ideas as calmly welcoming death or returning to the sea of stars, in the end, he had to have a little bearing. After all, he was Mount Li's Junior Martial Uncle.

How should a person live their life? This was a question that Su Li had thought about many times, but in the end, he had never found an answer. The vast majority of the time, he relied on his likes and dislikes to guide his behavior. But as for how a person should end their life, he had long since reached a conclusion.

To die at the hands of one of the Storms of the Eight Directions, although starkly different from what he had imagined, was still something he could reluctantly accept.

Holding the reins of the horse, Chen Changsheng lowered his head and silently watched the raindrops fall in front of his boots.

Now that things had come to this, there was no meaning in doing anything else. It was this world that wanted to kill Su Li, and the person at the end of this rainy street was one of the supreme experts of the world. No matter how fast and how strong his dagger was, it would not be able to block him.

Wang Po also said nothing.

But he began to roll up his sleeves.

His actions were very slow, very focused, very careful.

He rolled the sleeve of his right arm up to his elbow.

With this, he could wield his blade a bit faster.

Su Li's expression turned a little cold.

Previously when had said those harsh words, claiming that a Storm of the Eight Directions like Zhu Luo wanted to kill a junior like Wang Po, he had been doing so to protect Wang Po's life...the blood on his hands was too great, so Zhu Luo could find many excuses to kill him, but to kill Wang Po was different. Without a firm enough reason, any action taken against Wang Po could be explained as jealousy of a junior and envy of ability, because he did not want a shockingly talented junior to replace him. In spite of the general interest of humanity, he would sorrowfully become a murderer.

As long as Wang Po did not take action of his own volition, under the watchful eyes of these several hundred cultivators, Zhu Luo had no means of doing anything to Wang Po. It might even be the case that he and the other Eight Storms would have to ensure Wang Po's life and safety for a short time afterwards.

But Wang Po did not have any intention of giving way.

He rolled up his sleeves and revealed his arms, preparing to attack.

The rainy street grew even quieter.

Su Li quietly looked at Wang Po.

Zhu Luo quietly looked at Wang Po.

Wang Po acted like he didn't know anything. He began to use his sleeves to polish his metal blade. His expression was calm and focused, his actions slow and serious.

Zhu Luo suddenly began to laugh, because he had finally gotten truly angry.

His anger could not be sensed from his smile, but Xunyang City could feel it very clearly.

The clouds in the sky were pressed down even lower and the rain instantly turned into a torrential downpour.

This was the august majesty of the Divine Domain, like the might of the heavens.

Then his smile disappeared and he impassively said a single sentence to Wang Po.

"You...are prepared to attack me?"

# Chapter 396 - The Metal Blade Shocks The Storm (I)

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Zhu Luo's words seemed very ordinary, but they were actually extremely unyielding and tyrannical. Every person there could clearly tell that the actual words were: 'You would actually have the audacity to attack me?'

Wang Po's two legs did not move. His rolling of the sleeves and polishing of the blade were only preparations for battle. He had not yet attacked, but this was already enough to cause Zhu Luo's concealed fury to reach its peak, because it had been many years since there had been anyone who dared to attack him.

The Storms of the Eight Directions were almost gods, and any attempt to strike a god was to provoke, to blaspheme, to seek death. Even if it was just an attitude, it was still unacceptable, even coming from Wang Po of Tianliang.

The people on the street were also incredibly astonished. They didn't understand why Wang Po would do such a thing, robbing himself of any future opportunities.

Zhu Luo's cultivation had long since exceeded the realm of mortals and entered the domain of the divine.

Even if the White Emperor couple was not included, the human world had eleven supreme experts, and he was one of them.

Wang Po was the first ranked on the Proclamation of Liberation and was most certainly the supreme expert of the Middle generation. Back then when he had entered the upper level of Star Condensation at the age of forty, it had truly shaken the entire world, but the distance from there to the Saint Realm was like that between a swamp and the sea of stars.

Many people were optimistic that Wang Po would enter the Divine Domain in the future and become one of the new generation of the Storms of the Eight Directions, and perhaps achieve an even higher attainment. However, these were all necessarily things that would occur several decades or even several centuries later.

In front of Zhu Luo, the current Wang Po was a mere junior who could only bow his head and receive his senior's instruction.

And yet, he actually wanted to attack Zhu Luo?

"Junior would not dare."

Wang Po lifted his head and looked at Zhu Luo with a calm and even somewhat wooden expression.

Zhu Luo's face gradually grew pacified and the atmosphere hanging over the rainy street seemed to grow a little bit more relaxed.

Wang Po raised his metal blade, pointing at this unshakable

expert of the continent through the curtain of rain. "Senior is invited to attack first."

The street was in a complete uproar, such that even the pouring rain was incapable of covering the cries of alarm and discussion rising from the crowd.

Zhu Luo's brows suddenly leapt up and a majestic Qi tore into the sky, jolting the torrential rains into suddenly dispersing.

And then he once more began to roar with laughter, his cold and elegant laughter resounding through all of Xunyang City.

"What a pity."

Zhu Luo apathetically said, seeming very regretful. Because amongst the several humans that had the greatest chance of entering the Divine Domain, one of them would die today and would cease to have such a chance.

"What a pity." Su Li sighed.

He did not want Wang Po to die and so had done a few things, but Wang Po did not accept. This was because Wang Po's path of the blade was different from his path of the sword, and it was also different from Zhou Dufu's. His blade emphasized the word 'straight'.

When Wang Po began to roll up his sleeves, Su Li suddenly felt

that in the future, this guy's blade would burst forth with a light that would be completely different from his or Zhou Dufu's, but would perhaps be even more interesting.

So he felt that it really was a great pity.

This world had no opportunity to see Wang Po's future blade. Presumably, the entire world also felt regret.

Liang Wangsun looked through the rain at Wang Po, saying nothing, his emotions a little complex. In order to accomplish this task, to complete his life experience, he had been willing to abandon his life. Something like advancing forward into some unchallengeable place was something that was not difficult for geniuses like him to understand or accept. It was why he had been willing to pay with his life in order to kill Su Li. There was a vast and bloody sea in his spiritual world, but what about Wang Po's? Could it be that Wang Po's spiritual world was really only based off the philosophy in his heart?

With this one thought, he was suddenly filled with a great deal of admiration. He thought to himself, no wonder I've never been able to catch up with him through these thirty-odd years. No wonder Xiao Zhang could never catch up to him in these thirty-odd years despite how crazily he cultivated. No wonder Xun Mei could only shut himself up in the Mausoleum of Books for thirty-odd years and was only able to transcend and stand shoulder to shoulder with this person right before his death, relying on his life-and-death struggle.

Similarly, Chen Changsheng was also looking at Wang Po. He did

not say anything, nor was he thinking about much. He only subconsciously exclaimed with endless admiration. He thought that Wang Po was very handsome, and for some reason...he felt very close to him.

Then he understood that Wang Po was very much like many of the people that stood at Chen Changsheng's side...no, it should be that he knew many people that were very much like Wang Po in certain aspects, like Zhexiu, like Tang Thirty-Six, like Gou Hanshi, like...him.

Those places of resemblance were often the most dazzling, like dedication, like warmth, like resoluteness, like willpower, like pride, like silence. Chen Changsheng saw everything about him and his friends in Wang Po. He wore shabby clothes, and yet he seemed to emit boundless light. In Wang Po, he even saw the beauty of Lady Chen Chujian and even saw Nanke.

'I am firmly aware that I am no match, but I will still fight and slay you.' The sort of person who believed this was truly extraordinary. Besides Senior Yu Ren, Chen Changsheng felt that there was another person to learn from in his life of cultivation.

Thus, he began to learn.

He began to roll up his sleeve and at the same time take out the Dragoncry dagger from its sheath.

At this point, Wang Po inserted the hilt of his blade into its sheath. With a crisp clack, the blade and sheath became one,

transforming into one large blade. Then he tightly gripped the blade with both hands and stared straight ahead at Zhu Luo.

Chen Changsheng thought this was ingenious. He took his dagger and inserted it into its sheath, and thus the dagger turned into a sword with a very long hilt. Similarly, he used his two hands to tightly grasp the hilt and stared at Zhu Luo.

Just like this, separated by about ten zhang, with one in front and one in back, they stood in the rain.

As Su Li sat on the horse, his face which had been washed by the rain seemed somewhat pale, but his eyes seemed to grow increasingly bright.

Zhu Luo walked over, and while the rain did not grow any heavier, the wind seemed to grow colder and the light seemed to grow dim. Some people looked up at the sky and saw that the dark clouds above had become much darker and heavier.

The Solitary Drunk under the Moon had no deep attachments. His Dao was precisely the severing of emotions and the destruction of his nature, to be pure and lonely without equal.

With the rise and fall of his feet, the fallen leaves in the puddles of rain were suddenly jolted upwards. Carrying pearls of water, they were sent dancing everywhere by the cold wind. With the dancing of these wet leaves, a bleak sensation shrouded the entirety of the long street.

Several muffled groans and pained cries arose from the crowd. Those wet leaves which had been stirred up by this stalwart intent were like stalwart arrows, gashing several cultivators. The crowd suddenly awoke from their stupor and realized just how terrifying the coming battle would be. One by one, they fled to more distant streets. In a flash, the long street became much more quiet and completely deserted.

To say that it was deserted was not wholly accurate, since there was still the torrential downpour.

Within the torrent of rain, an unopposable Storm of the continent was slowly walking.

Wang Po lifted his blade, Chen Changsheng led the horse, and Su Li sat upon the horse as they confronted the Storm.

Standing at the very front was Wang Po.

With a swish, the metal blade rose up to welcome rain, bared horizontally in front of him.

Wang Po did not strike because he was a junior and Zhu Luo was a senior.

Zhu Luo would naturally not take advantage of him. Lifting his hand, in those layers upon layers of rain, he lightly pointed. This was the equivalent of him attacking.

A muffled thunderclap boomed in front of Wang Po. There was a sudden squall and rain began to pour down, as if a waterfall had suddenly appeared there.

The soaked leaves continued to dance in the rain.

Zhu Luo walked unhurriedly through the rain, his black cape also dancing in the rain.

Wang Po's face had paled by several degrees.

His Blade Domain was bearing an unimaginable crushing force. In the space in front of him, the fine drizzle of rain flew around in every direction and several hundred scars incessantly appeared and disappeared. Those scars were places where his Blade Domain and Zhu Luo's Qi collided.

Zhu Luo did not purposefully raise his Qi. He just slowly ambled forward like a courteous great guest.

Between Wang Po and Zhu Luo, the gap in strength and cultivation was too obvious.

Zhu Luo had not fully released his imposing sword intent, but it had been enough to cause the entire street to empty out. Even the two silent walls on either side of the street had been deeply gashed countless times by those wet leaves.

The hands that Wang Po used to grip his blade began to tremble,

his fingers somewhat white.

The torrential rain had drenched his entire body. In the countless drops of falling rain, it was a mystery how much of it was actually sweat.

In a single confrontation, he found that the metal wind could not move the jade dew. He was no match for Zhu Luo, but he still had no intention of turning around and leaving. He refused to retreat a single step, his blade still held horizontally in front of him, like a dike or mountain.

(TN: The line about metal wind and jade dew is actually a reference to a romantic poem about the Double Seventh Festival.)

Even if the storm were even more fierce, that dike would still stand, that mountain would still remain, straight and across without equal.

(TN: Straight and across, 橫直, can also mean 'come what may'.)

Seeing that blade which seemed to be washed even colder by the rain, sensing the obstinacy and strength that exceeded his imagination, Zhu Luo slightly perked his brows. He felt somewhat surprised. Further away, Xue He was so shocked that he was speechless.

Wang Po's blade was actually stronger than anyone had imagined.

His blade could actually withstand the might of the Divine

Domain.

How did he do it?

Xue He used the blade. When he looked at the thin man standing in the rainy street, he finally completely understood what the words Su Li had relayed to him meant.

Wang Po only used one blade.

Only by using one blade could there be only one path of the blade. Only this way could it be pure enough, strong enough!

Before Wang Po, this continent's most famous expert of the blade was Zhou Dufu. Zhou Dufu also only cultivated in one path of the blade, the killing path. He used life and death to cleave life and death. Wang Po could not learn Zhou Dufu's blade, so he walked his own path.

He walked a straight path.

To describe it in one word, Wang Po's path of the blade was about the word 'straight'. This 'straight' had the meaning of 'straightforward'. The path he walked was straight, the words he wrote when doing accounting were straight, and he would never calculate his numbers wrong.

What he saw and what he did had always depended on his likes and dislikes, loves and hates. It almost seemed like even his

intestines were straight. So even if he seemed so poverty-stricken that it was embarrassing to mention, when his blade left its sheath, it would inevitably have a cold edge, as straight as the steep precipice of a mountain.

How could the fiercest storm destroy a cliff in such a short time?

Zhu Luo had already attacked.

Now, it should be Wang Po's turn to attack.

When he attacked, he would naturally strike with the blade.

He attacked with only one blade.

He gripped his sheath which had become a long hilt. One blade flew through the fierce storm and slashed at Zhu Luo.

Without question, this was definitely the most powerful strike Wang Po had performed in his life, because Zhu Luo was definitely the most powerful opponent he had ever faced in his life. If not for Su Li, there was logically no reason why he should battle Zhu Luo right as he was on the threshold of entering the Saint Realm. Moreover, out of interest for the entirety of humanity, Zhu Luo would also have not attacked.

In other words, this battle had occurred several decades, even several centuries, in advance.

The blade energy flourished and the edge cleaved through the curtains of rain, coming to Zhu Luo's body.

Zhu Luo still did not intend to use his sword. He once again attacked.

This time, he used two fingers.

Wang Po's blade paused in the middle of the downpour, unable to advance.

Separated by ten-odd zhang, Zhu Luo transformed his two fingers into a storm and held fast the most powerful strike of Wang Po's life. It was just like how Liang Wangsun had used two fingers to hold Chen Changsheng's dagger. The difference between Chen Changsheng and Liang Wangsun's strength was vast, and the difference between Wang Po and Zhu Luo was just as vast, or perhaps even more!

The distance between the mortal world and the divine had always been so vast and impassable.

On the long street, the storm and the blade met, the wet leaves still dancing in the rain.

With several sharp snicks, several tears appeared on Wang Po's clothes.

In the end, his Blade Domain was not perfect, especially when he was attacking.

For a supreme expert of the continent like Zhu Luo, his eyes themselves were the Intellectual Sword.

A fallen leaf, seemingly in tune with the truth of the world, avoided Wang Po's blade energy and drifted onto the metal blade. Along with this falling, an unimaginable amount of true essence descended, falling upon the blade like a great mountain.

Wang Po's face turned as pale as snow and a stream of blood seeped out of his mouth.

His Blade Domain was already shattered.

What could he do?

He suddenly took one step forward.

Then he lowered his waist, bent his knees, and turned his wrists.

He...retrieved his blade.

The blade broke through the rain as it returned, making only a light sound.

That fallen leaf instantly turned into fine strands.

From the torrential rain came the sound of Su Li's acclamation.

"Good blade!"

# Chapter 397 - The Metal Blade Shocks The Storm (II)

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The first blade Wang Po had struck out at Zhu Luo with was the most powerful strike he had made in his entire life, but Su Li had given no response. Now when Wang Po retrieved his blade, Su Li's acclamation pierced through the downpour and landed in everyone's ear. Because besides Zhu Luo, only Su Li was an expert that walked through the divine domain, and only Su Li could understand just how arduous of a task it was for Wang Po to retrieve his blade.

In addition, what did the destruction of the wet leaf at the hands of this blade indicate? It indicated that Wang Po had seen through the sky-spanning storm that Zhu Luo had used to hold him!

For an upper level Star Condensation expert to surpass the threshold and see the laws and operations of that world, just how inconceivable of an idea was it? Seeing through it was already an extremely onerous task, let alone breaking through it. Wang Po's comprehension of his sole path of the blade was truly too profound, not like someone who had cultivated for several decades but like someone who had immersed himself in a long life of several centuries!

In his life, Su Li had met countless cultivating geniuses and had personally instructed Qiushan Jun, Qi Jian, and Chen Changsheng. But he had still been shocked by the talent concealed in this blade.

The blade edge washed cold by the rain and the soaked fallen leaf met in the air. Anything, once soaked, would get heavier, and this

fallen leaf was as weighty as a great mountain, yet even so, it could not resist the cleaving of the blade. With a muffled bang, that wet leaf turned into countless bits and drifted in every direction. It was like a suddenly expanding ball had appeared in the gloomy and rainy street.

Berserk true essence accompanied the countless fallen leaves that drifted around like cotton threads. Countless densely packed holes had been scored into the hard gray stone of the ground. The walls of the street had long since been covered by countless blade slashes, but were now chopped into piles of sand.

Wang Po once again held his blade horizontally and his Blade Domain covered him once more.

His body, as well as the bodies of Chen Changsheng holding the reins and Su Li on the horse further back, were all protected by his blade.

There was an intense clattering sound like countless needles simultaneously landing on a glossy metal surface, unbroken and unending.

The wind accompanying the torrential rain also blew more swiftly, gusting up everything. Several li away in the ruins of the inn, an elaborate abacus sat in the filthy water. As the wind blew against the beads of the abacus, they crisply clacked together, sounding just like a song.

The storm gradually died down, the long street gradually grew

still, and the beads of the abacus gradually ceased to move.

Wang Po still stood at his original position, not giving a single step. His metal blade was still in his hands without any intention of being put down. But his face was extremely pale and his plain clothes were scored with tears and streaks of blood.

The street was quiet, water dripping from the remaining eaves. Drip drop drip drop. But no one would be bothered by these things, because no one would care about them.

Chen Changsheng's hands no longer grasped the reins. His two hands were grasping his dagger while he seriously and attentively looked forward, looking over Wang Po's shoulder at the godlike and unchallengeable expert. Wang Po had already suffered severe injuries, yet at this point, Zhu Luo had not truly attacked. No matter from which angle it was looked at, Wang Po had already lost, but for him to obstruct Zhu Luo for a few moments was still very amazing.

Next, it was naturally his turn to obstruct Zhu Luo.

Zhu Luo did not pay any attention to Chen Changsheng's movements. His expression a little peculiar, he looked at Wang Po and said, "I didn't expect that even though you hadn't even cultivated to the peak of Star Condensation and were even further from being half a step from the Saint realm, you would still manage to pry into a few laws of the Divine Domain?"

Wang Po replied, "The ten thousand things share the same

principle, so there are naturally places where the mortal world and the divine intersect."

Zhu Luo said, "Such talent, such perception, no wonder you would dare strike at me...but just what meaning is there to it?"

Yes, in the general scheme of things, Wang Po's talent and unswerving determination were absolutely meaningless.

Because it was impossible for him to defeat Zhu Luo.

Zhu Luo's sword was still in its sheath, but Zhu Luo could still drench the number one ranked expert of the Proclamation of Liberation in blood, could still inflict heavy injuries upon his body.

A name moves the eight directions, a storm darkens the skies. As expected, they were strong beyond belief.

The gap between the two with regards to age, cultivation, and the abyss that separated the divine from the ordinary, was simply impossible to bridge with things like talent and willpower. How could Wang Po have a justification for why he hadn't been defeated?

But there were some people that thought differently.

"You lost," Su Li said.

When the distant crowd of spectators heard this statement, they were filled with confusion. How could this be? Wang Po is covered in blood and is clearly severely wounded; just where can you find a single chance of winning on him?

Sitting on the horse, Su Li looked at Zhu Luo and said, "To lose against this sort of junior, don't you feel a little ashamed?"

Zhu Luo's hair that spilled onto his shoulders was gently lifted up by the breeze, and his two brows similarly rose up. Yet just as he was about to say something, he suddenly stopped himself. He lowered his head and looked over himself. There were no wounds, no blood, only a corner of his sleeve slowly drifting to the ground.

A tiny piece of his left sleeve had been cut off.

Whether it was Zhu Luo or any other cultivator at any sort of realm, none of them would have their strength affected by this in the slightest. But when he saw that piece of cloth gently drift down into the puddle in front of him, Zhu Luo said nothing for a very long time. As the crowd looked on, they made no sound. They all thought to themselves, could it be that he actually lost? But where did he lose?

No one understood Su Li's words or Zhu Luo's silence. Chen Changsheng also did not understand while Liang Wangsun vaguely understood a little. Wang Po understood, but he did not accept it.

Victory or defeat. Win or lose. From a literal aspect, they both had completely identical meanings. It was only at certain

moments, in certain special circumstances, that defeat did not mean you had lost. For instance, if some hooligan dressed in black and white dashed his head against cement but still managed to gently tap the head of some exceptional villain with a piece of wood, although it was meaningless, he had still won. Su Li would naturally use this sort of worth to judge Wang Po and Zhu Luo's first exchange. Of course Wang Po had been defeated. It was uncontroversial, right and inevitable, in accord with the laws of heaven and the principles of the earth that he had been defeated, but Su Li still thought that it was Zhu Luo who had lost.

Zhu Luo's reactions indicated that to some degree, he acknowledged Su Li's words.

'When Zhou Dufu was three years old, could he possibly have had the ability to defeat the world and be without adversary? When the Tianhai Empress first entered the palace, just who could she beat? If you were as old as Wang Po right now, could you beat him?' These were the words Su Li said to Zhu Luo. This reasoning seemed somewhat fallacious, but it was actually very reasonable. It was just that this argument had to involve the supreme experts of the continent before it could be understood.

Chen Changsheng understood. With a rather vacant look on his face, he began to think, if we compare in terms of people who are the same age as me, then I...ah, there's still Xu Yourong and lady Chen Chujian; how could I be the strongest? Su Li did not know what Chen Changsheng was thinking about, or else he would definitely tease him a little. He continued to say to Zhu Luo, "There's still another problem: you retreated too fiercely."

Zhu Luo said nothing. The fine rain fell down, but it did not dare to touch the cape over his body and floated away to avoid it.

"Back then, with your one sword reflecting the moon, you could kill the second Demon General in one blow. But now, how could you possibly be Hai Di's opponent? Once you were a confident youth who could write poems and kill his enemies, but now you've already gotten old, lacking any of the drive. If that were all, fine. But contrary to expectations, your manner is not at all imposing, not even comparable to that woman Tianhai. In the past several hundred years, you didn't even dare to take a single step into the capital. Today, you want to take an opportunity to kill a junior that might threaten your position. Tsk, tsk, you really have grown up."

Su Li continued, "Why? You're old—almost a thousand years old—and should have died a long time ago. To be old and not die, what is that? It's a thief, an old thief. Ah, people. They're just like trees. When they're at their healthiest and sturdiest, they should do their best to brag in the spring wind. When they grow too old and still cling desperately to their lives, their bodies will grow old and their wood will rot, until finally a lightning bolt cleaves down and turns them into burnt ash. Just what meaning is there in that?"

Zhu Luo finally opened his mouth and said to Su Li, "Are you done speaking?"

Su Li replied, "I'm done scolding."

Zhu Luo replied, "What you say is reasonable."

Su Li's sword-like brows perked upwards and he said with some interest, "How about it?"

Zhu Luo responded, "This is your second sword."

Every word condemning, every phrase like a sword—although Su Li was so wounded that he couldn't fight, he still had his sword heart. His spoken words also had the ability to wound others.

Su Li calmly looked at him and confirmed that this old fellow truly had the qualification to be absolutely arrogant. He actually hadn't been the least bit affected.

"I've received two of your swords. Then, it should be my turn to take out my sword."

With these words, Zhu Luo's right hand descended like a dragon breaking through the clouds. It came to his waist and gripped the hilt of his sword.

The dark clouds grew heavier, the dense rain fell, the skies grew darker, and the leaves fell layer upon layer, dancing in between the droplets of rain as they filled the sky.

Zhu Luo extracted his sword from its sheath. This sword was not very bright and didn't seem very unusual. Yet the edges of the dark clouds that shrouded Xunyang City abruptly grew brighter, as if they had been plated with silver. Was it a halo of light? What was

behind the layer of clouds? Was it the sun? No, it was that which should never have appeared in the world of humans: the Moon of the demons.

In Zhu Luo's past, this had been his greatest glory.

Many years ago, on the snowy plains, he saw the bright moon, recited a very beautiful poem, and slew a very powerful opponent. Just like that, he became one of the supreme experts of the continent and obtained the title of Solitary Drunk Under the Moon.

At last, this expert displayed to Xunyang City the true sight of the Saint Realm.

Separated by layers and layers of heavy rain and innumerable fallen leaves, Chen Changsheng still sensed the boundless and dignified strength of that light. He felt his body become more rigid, so much that he subconsciously wanted to flee. Was this the Saint Realm? Originally, ‘domain’ here had not referred to the Star Domain of the Star Condensation Realm. A light enveloped all with no boundary of any sort. Then how could one attack it? He had studied the Daoist Canon since he was a child, and in terms of experience and learning, he wouldn't lose to anyone. Yet he could not understand the light at the edge of the dark clouds and the light brought by that sword, because the laws and operations of the Divine Domain had already surpassed his ability to understand.

The pitch-black rain, the shining sword, the leaden clouds which seemed ready to ignite.

Before such a spectacular backdrop, Wang Po's figure seemed all the more insignificant, as if it could be swallowed up at any moment.

"Forget it!" Chen Changsheng yelled at him.

Wang Po did not turn around. "I still want to try. It's not easy to get this sort of experience."

The downpour washed his face that was without fear and without joy. Just like his voice, it was so calm that it would make the heart tremble and feel respect.

It was a true calm, a calm like hearing the Dao in the morning and being willing to die in the evening.

(TN: This is a reference to the line in the Analects of Confucius, "If I hear the Way in the morning, I am content even to die that evening".)

Chen Changsheng said no more. He knew that he had once again learned a few more things.

Zhu Luo's sword had come.

The world was maybe bright, or maybe dark. As the sword came, the dark storm came holding the light. No matter how vast the world was, there would still be no place to hide. Wang Po also had no way to hide.

He once again struck out with his blade. He brandished his blade in the same old, straightforward style, but the place where the blade energy landed was completely different.

He did not cleave at the sword glow, not at the sky of dancing leaves, not at Zhu Luo ten-odd zhang away, but at the storm.

At the path which the storm traveled through the air.

Wang Po's metal blade fell straightforwardly, chopping apart the pillars of rain, ripping apart the threads of wind, and tearing apart the air.

With a screech, a gloomy hole appeared in the rainy street.

As long as one was in this world, there was no way to avoid Zhu Luo's sword?

Then he would cleave open a new road and go together to a new world!

# Chapter 398 - Taking Out The Sword (I)

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Wang Po's blade was very powerful. Only with a powerful and sharp blade could he use the compacted true essence of the upper level of Star Condensation to break through that seemingly weak, yet actually incomparably firm, space barrier. Similarly, only when his response was powerful and clever enough could he cut open the space, giving him the ability to surpass the abyss between the secular world and the divine and resist Zhu Luo's moonlight-imbued sword.

The clouds above Xunyang City were still low and dark, their edges still shining like silver. It was like night. The storms that ravaged the street suddenly disappeared and the streets became abnormally quiet. One could only faintly hear the sound of breathing. Those were sighs of shock that came from the distant surrounding spectators. This battle had already surpassed the scope of many people's imaginations, but they could still sense that Zhu Luo's sword truly had been blocked by Wang Po. Just how had he accomplished this feat?

This time, Su Li did not voice his acclamation, and his expression grew grave. It wasn't because this attack of Wang Po's was not brilliant enough. On the contrary, he felt that this blade was far too exquisite. It was almost like in this brief instant, in the time between these two attacks, Wang Po had used this battle with this supreme expert of the continent to understand some things and take another step on his path of the blade.

If this was true, then Wang Po's talent in cultivating the Dao could truly be said to astound the world. In addition, this sort of opportunity could only come up once in a thousand years. If Wang

Po could live past this battle and completely digest the precious experience gained from it, perhaps he might be able to quickly break through into the peak of the Star Condensation realm, and even be able to see the threshold of the Saint realm.

But would Wang Po be able to survive? Especially after these two blade strikes had more than proved to Zhu Luo that Wang Po could threaten his position in the Storms of the Eight Directions in a few more decades? Su Li had no hope about this, so his expression was grave. He thought it was too pitiful.

The storm kicked up again and the rain fell like banging drums.

Zhu Luo's sword brought with it an endless storm. After the storm would come a rainbow, but behind the storm, in the even more distant sky of the north, there was a bright Moon. There was light and there was darkness, but the vast majority of the light and darkness were both sucked into those cracks in space on the long street, their might diminished greatly. This was why Wang Po's metal blade could still be raised up in this torrential downpour.

Yet in the end, the Eight Storms were no ordinary cultivating experts. They were the supreme experts of the continent, possessing unimaginable quantities of true essence, possessing an intelligence and battle experience that surpassed one's wild dreams, and possessing the most dazzling brilliance. Ultimately, it was impossible for Wang Po's blade to restrain that light. It was just like how the dark clouds above Xunyang City were incapable of obscuring the moon. In the end, the edges of the clouds became plated with a silver sheen. The rainy street was as dark as the night, and the hole in space cleaved out by the blade was an even

darker black, causing hearts to beat faster in fear. Yet the edges of those pitch-black cracks in space, for some unknown reason, began to glow.

That light came from Zhu Luo's sword.

Accompanied by berserk winds and violent rain, the sword glow arrived before Wang Po's body. At the moment, Wang Po's blade needed to continue to cleave through the rainy street so as to maintain enough cracks in space. Only this way could he prevent Zhu Luo's sword shining with moonlight from breaking through and reaching his body, then proceeding directly to Chen Changsheng and Su Li behind him. As such, he could not pay any attention to those sword glows.

Those sword glows were not very bright, and could even be described as somewhat dim. Wang Po's Blade Domain that could be called perfect was actually no use in obstructing these sword glows. The sword glows descended, and with a swish, Wang Po's clothes were suddenly cut into pieces. Upon his body, which had undergone perfect Purification, appeared countless distinct sword slashes with blood slowly seeping out of them.

The sword glows continued to surmount his blade and ravage his body. Although they seemed very understated, in reality, they were absolutely unforgettable.

Every one of the sword glows would cut a wound upon his body and carried away a little blood with it.

Wang Po's face grew even more pale, without a hint of blood to be seen. In the gloomy street, the sight was exceptionally disturbing. His expression was still calm and resolute; only his two very special eyebrows drooped down even more, as if they were rather dejected. He seemed to be suffering even more than he usually was. Yes, at this time, his situation truly was very bitter.

Zhu Luo's sword glows had cut away at his body. This was like a death by a thousand cuts—just how painful would it be? This sort of pain was also in his spiritual world and in his heart. As a genius of the path of the blade, he was currently a great hero of the south, yet now in his hometown of Tianliang County, he had encountered Zhu Luo and could still only painfully and miserably endure this suffering. Even if his talent and will were greater, so what? In the end, it would not be able to change the gap in strength and cultivation between them. It was just like the bitter experience of the Wang clan all those years ago, that sort of situation that would cause despair. Just how could it not be bitter?

Only when he put away his blade, departed the rainy street, and chose to yield would he be able to escape this suffering.

Yet life has many sufferings that are impossible to yield to.

As a child, Wang Po had grown accustomed to bitter days and clearly understood this point. So he had no intention of yielding. His eyebrows dropping, his expression distressed, his head slightly lowered, he tightly gripped his dagger and stood in the pouring rain. He did this despite stream after stream of blood flowing down his body from those sword glows that overcame his blade intent, and despite the increasingly heavy downpour that washed the

blood off his body.

The blade intent on the rainy street was still straight, as were the cracks cut through space. Therefore, the falling rain could not reach those places, and even Zhu Luo temporarily could not move forward. The vast majority of his sword intent could not reach Wang Po's side.

Wang Po stood very straight. But how long could he continue to stand? How long could he hold the blade in his hands?

The pouring rain was bitterly cold and the frantic winds gradually became even more blustery.

The abacus in the ruins of the inn stirred to life once more, its beads beginning to clack against each other, as if they were beating out a rhythm.

In a side street even further way, the musicians of the Liang Household had made their escape quite a while ago. All sorts of musical instruments littered the street. Now, great gusts of wind blew them every which way. A gong crashed against a wall, a stone toppled from the top of the wall, and then the stone beat upon the surface of a drum. A flute flew into the air, and the air poured into the holes of the flute and made a whimpering noise. There was also a zither, whose strings snapped one by one...

Strum strum strum strum.

It was a well-rushed and disorderly tune.

When the storm finally stopped, would the song finally finish?

Nobody would know.

At the rear of the rainy street, the crowd stood around in silence. Liang Wangsun stood at the very front, his expression indescribably calm. Liang Hongzhuang stood on the other side of the street, as if he didn't want to stand next to that distantly related princely cousin of his. For some reason, he looked through the storm at the distant figure of Wang Po. His expression was very strange, seemingly about to cry, and also seemingly about to laugh. In short, it was very complex.

No one knew what would happen next, or even could imagine what would happen next.

The dark clouds obscured the sky, turning day into night. The ordinary folk of Xunyang City tightly shut their doors and windows, perhaps concealing themselves under their beds or in jars. None of them dared to come out. At the moment, the streets were still filled with cultivators, and all these cultivators had come to kill Su Li. Under normal circumstances, if experts like Zhu Luo and Wang Po were to battle, these cultivators wouldn't dare to make the tiniest movement, out of fear that they would enrage one of them. Who could know what sort of price they and the sect or school behind them would have to pay? But today, many people no longer thought about these things. The moment they stepped into Xunyang City, they were already prepared to pay with their lives.

Liang Wangsun, Liang Hongzhuang, and even Xue He were not thinking of anything, but those other cultivators were thinking about quite a lot.

At the moment, Su Li was sitting on the back of that buckskin horse. In the storm-ridden sky, he seemed exceptionally striking to the eye. Everyone knew that Su Li was presently the equivalent of a cripple. Moreover, Lin Canghai had successfully managed to force out Su Li's final attack. And previously when Chen Changsheng had blocked Xiao Zhang and Liang Wangsun's attacks, just how much of a price had he paid? He should be very exhausted. As for Wang Po, he was currently being suppressed by Zhu Luo's sword and it was difficult for him to move. Then if they were to attack Su Li at this moment, who would save him? Who could still help Su Li block a spear?

Many people were thinking this way, so they began to do it. Using the storm to conceal their sounds, they walked out onto the street and towards the man sitting on the horse. As Liang Wangsun and Liang Hongzhuang watched the people standing beside them take their leave, they could feel the coldness and killing intent coming from their bodies. They remained silent, not stopping them or making any sort of sound.

The reins of the buckskin horse lay in a puddle on the ground. Maybe it was because of the type of horse, or maybe it was because of Su Li, but the strange sights brought about by Zhu Luo's sword and the waves of Qi from the terrifying battle did not startle this steed into charging off. Rather, it remained obediently where it was with its head down.

Chen Changsheng also had his head lowered, watching the ripples of the raindrops in silence.

The Dragoncry dagger and the sheath were finally connected. Since he had left Xining Village's old temple, this was the first time. Back then in Xining Village, Senior Yu Ren would only choose to combine them in this way when he went hunting for powerful monsters in the back mountain. The reason he had chosen to do this today was that the enemy he faced was simply too powerful, and also that he wanted to learn from Wang Po.

Suddenly, he raised his head and then turned around.

Those cultivators did not imagine that he had been keeping watch over his back.

Chen Changsheng and those cultivators stared off in silence.

Not far away, that raging and divine sword intent was growing ever stronger.

Chen Changsheng did not care about that side. That side had Wang Po.

Right now, he had to care about this side.

He had already thought about everything, so he was very calm.

The expression in his eyes was very serene. No matter how fiercely the rain fell on his face, it could not be disturbed.

One cultivator yelled out and his body suddenly split into three as he attacked Su Li.

Chen Changsheng's two hands tightened their grip on the dagger and slashed into the rain.

The dagger landed several zhang away. It was only one dagger, but it managed to simultaneously slash at three figures, three people.

This was not the Intellectual Sword, nor was it the Blazing Sword. This was a technique of the Mount Li Sword Style called the Three Lanes of the Plum Flower.

Three days ago, Su Li had inadvertently told him about it.

Screech!

Soon after came another sound.

Almost in unison, the sounds of three swords rang out in the rain. Those three figures simultaneously stopped in the middle of the air. Then two figures dissipated and the cultivator gave a groan. Holding his stomach, he collapsed into the street.

In Chen Changsheng's hands, the Dragoncry dagger seemed to be alive.

After only a few rounds, those cultivators that were prepared to attack Su Li collapsed one after the other.

Just then, he saw out of the corner of his eye that Wang Po...also seemed about to collapse.

Instantly, he made a decision.

# Chapter 399 - Taking Out The Sword (II)

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Chen Changsheng decided that he could not wait until Wang Po had been defeated before acting. Standing in the rainy street, they had become two walls, one in front and one behind, but in reality, this was a meaningless distinction. He had originally thought this way because he had no self-confidence, because he wanted to be done with the ways of the world and listen to the dictates of fate. His talent could be even more shocking, but in the end, he had only cultivated for a bit more than one year. Without even mentioning the severed meridians in his body, when just speaking in terms of time, to want to fight with one of the Storms of the Eight Directions was a truly an absurd and ridiculous notion.

He had originally thought that even if he were in a short while to use his sword, it would only be to succor his heart a little. But now he had changed his mind. Because for each cultivator that collapsed, his confidence increased by some measure. Ethereal Opening cultivators could no longer threaten him, and even a cultivator that should have been in the initial level of Star Condensation had also been cut down in the rain!

If the battle on the other end of the street had not been so high-level, so dazzling, then perhaps even more people would have noticed the inconceivable task he had just accomplished. The increase in power he had gained in the Mausoleum of Books, the harvest he had reaped in the Garden of Zhou, the lessons in the sword he had learned from Su Li, and Wang Po's figure in the pouring rain—all were finally demonstrated in that sword of his.

Seeing Wang Po bitterly enduring in the storm, watching as blood incessantly flowed out of his body only to be swiftly washed

away by the torrential rain, Chen Changsheng's gradually growing confidence and gradually recovering true essence caused an extremely fierce desire to rush out of his heart—he wanted to see if his sword could pierce Zhu Luo. Even if his opponent was a legendary Storm of the Eight Directions, he still wanted to take a stab at it. To tell the truth, he didn't know how he was going to attack or even where his sword was going to stab at. However, he believed that since he had already resolved himself to taking out his sword, then once he attacked, he would naturally understand how he would move the sword.

Chen Changsheng passed by those cultivators that had collapsed in the rain, leaving his position in front of Su Li and walking towards Wang Po. As he walked, his began to calm his heart and clear his mind, and his eyes grew brighter and brighter.

His opponent was Zhu Luo. The Saint Realm could easily suppress his Blazing Sword. Before the moonlight, how could the light of a firefly be bright? The sword intent like moonlight that covered the rainy street was elusive and difficult to pin down. It was simply impossible to calculate, so the Intellectual Sword was naturally useless. Then which technique should he use? Which sword was his strongest sword?

Chen Changsheng knew what his strongest sword was.

It was the sword that he had used at the Mausoleum of Zhou to strike at the shadow which had obscured half the sky.

He didn't know if he still had the ability to use that sword, but he wanted to try.

His spiritual sense rested on the Dragoncry dagger. Right now, the Dragoncry dagger was one with the sheath, so the instant his spiritual sense descended, it awakened those souls within the dagger.

He awakened the ten thousand broken swords, preparing to borrow their sword intent.

The Black Dragon also awoke.

He took a very deep breath and his true essence violently exploded. His body became broiling hot, and the constantly falling rain that touched his clothes instantly turned into steam, shrouding the upper half of his body. His broken meridians let out an almost unbearable sound, and a fierce pain was transmitted from various places in his body to his sea of consciousness. The frenzied true essence finally succeeded at breaking through several obstructions and reached his wrist. He had already completed his preparations for attacking. The countless sword intents within the swords and the Black Dragon's spiritual soul had also silently completed their preparations.

Yet it was just at this moment that Chen Changsheng noticed that the street around him had suddenly become gloomier. Was it because of the steam lingering around his eyes?

It wasn't because of the steam, but because a person was blocking the light that was scattered through the rainy street.

Chen Changsheng suddenly felt very cold.

His body had long since been soaked by the frigid rain. By all reason, he should have been numb to it, yet he distinctly felt a strand of cold wind brush against his neck.

The coldness came from the bottom of his heart. His body went rigid and he couldn't move.

It was only then that he remembered that he had forgotten something.

It was a most important thing.

To be more precise, he had forgotten a person.

A person that he absolutely should not have forgotten.

As he carried Su Li across tens of thousands of li of snowy plains, bringing him back from the land of demons to the human world, an assassin had accompanied them all the way.

That assassin was extremely famous, so Su Li somewhat looked down on him. Of course, only Su Li was worthy enough to look down upon that assassin. It must be known that this assassin was ranked third on the Ranking of Assassins drawn up by the Pavilion of Divination. There had never been anyone that dared to look down on that person. The vast majority of the people that looked down on him were probably already dead.

Chen Changsheng also knew that he was absolutely unqualified to look down on that assassin. Moreover, on their journey, Su Li would often silently stare at some distant mountain. From that scene, Chen Changsheng could tell that even Su Li, deep in the depths of his heart, felt some fear of that assassin.

He and Su Li had always been on guard, even when they were engaged in bitter struggle with Xue He and Liang Hongzhuang. Even when they had been forced into the most desperate straits, even when they might die soon after, they had still never forgotten about that assassin's existence and had a back-up plan prepared. Until just now, when Chen Changsheng finally forgot about this matter.

It was precisely when he was the most confident, when he believed himself to be at his strongest, when his battle intent and will were at their most firm.

He walked toward Zhu Luo, but he had to leave Su Li.

He did not know at that time that the assassin was between him and Su Li, drenched in the rain and lying on the ground. He had been pretending to be one of those cultivators that Chen Changsheng had cut down, and now that assassin was standing up.

He had concealed himself for dozens and dozens of days. The assassin had been waiting for the perfect opportunity.

The assassin wore no mask. His appearance was an ordinary one

that could be seen anywhere. When the rain fell upon his face, it left behind no marks. Similarly, it was very hard for his appearance to leave behind any lasting impression.

This was a very uninteresting and unremarkable person, like a rock on the side of the road, or a piece of broken pottery amongst the ruins.

Chen Changsheng sensed the movement behind him and his body became as stiff as a board. He wanted to turn around, but he knew that he would be too late.

It truly was too late. That assassin wouldn't give him any chance, nor would he give Su Li any chance.

The assassin rushed through the rain and arrived in front of the horse.

His movement techniques seemed very ordinary, but they were very quick.

Then he took out his sword.

His sword, as well as his sword technique, also seemed very ordinary, but they were both very quick.

In brief, everything happened very quickly.

However, this assassin's cultivation was far from ordinary. The tip of that ordinary sword silently shined with countless fragments of stars.

An extremely powerful and yet extremely lonely Qi went along with the sword.

Upper level Star Condensation!

An upper level Star Condensation assassin?

This had already surpassed many people's comprehension.

He had already reached the upper level of Star Condensation, so why was he still killing people for a living?

Why did that assassin want to kill Su Li?

Just how frightening was this assassin!

The heavy rain poured down without end.

His two hands gripping the sword, Chen Changsheng stood on the deluged street.

Behind him, that assassin was like a ghost as he attacked Su Li.

Everything had happened too quickly.

Everything seemed too late to change.

The sound of rain was like a furious roar.

Abruptly, a series of soft sounds could be heard.

It was the sound of a sword touching blood.

# Chapter 400 - The Final Move (I)

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The assassin was behind Chen Changsheng. He had used the simplest method, even a rather stupid one, to make Chen Changsheng leave all his vigilance and defensiveness behind. Right now, the assassin was already in front of Su Li, only one zhang away.

For an upper level Star Condensation assassin, this distance might as well not exist. Besides experts in the Divine Domain, only someone like Jin Yulu or Nanke, those rare few, could use their natural talent to overcome this assassin in terms of speed.

The assassin's and Su Li's eyes met in the pouring rain.

This was already an assassination that could not be prevented, so both of their eyes were very calm, but this calm concealed some extraordinarily complex emotions. As the assassin looked at Su Li, deep within the darkest depths of his emotionless eyes was a strand of unquenchable anguish and a hatred that had been accumulated over countless years. And when Su Li looked at this assassin that was breaking through the rain, the emotion in his eyes was very careless, as if he couldn't care less about what this person meant for his life. But why did he seem so grave?

The Yellow Paper Umbrella was in Su Li's left hand and had been soaked in the rain. His right hand was still a bit separated from the handle of the Yellow Paper Umbrella, but did he even have the strength for one more battle? In the next moment, would he grip the handle like he had that time on the snowy plain or just a while ago in the inn?

That assassin had silently tailed them for several weeks. Regardless of how desperate the struggle was when Chen Changsheng and Su Li confronted Xue He and Liang Hongzhuang, the assassin had never acted. Even previously in the inn, when Liang Wangsun and Xiao Zhang had appeared, he still had not availed himself of the opportunity to strike. It had to be said that this assassin that was ranked third in the world really did possess an unimaginably acute and prudent sense. At that time, he believed the situation could still change, so he never made his move. Only now, after Wang Po had entered the scene, Zhu Luo had taken out his sword, and Chen Changsheng had walked off with the hot-blooded passion of youth to the other end of the street, did he believe that the changes had reached their end, and he finally chose to take out his sword.

Once all of the changes had taken place, his appearance would be the only change.

Once the mountains and rivers are exhausted of water, once the receding water reveals the rocks, once the sun sets behind the mountain, once you walk to the end, there is naturally no way of looking back. This was just like how Chen Changsheng had left Su Li; even if it was only a dozen steps, it was already too late to look back, let alone turn his body to go to his rescue.

Chen Changsheng's body was very cold.

He was not Jin Yulu, nor was he Nanke. Although he knew the Yeshi Step, it was impossible for him to scramble in front of that assassin and return to Su Li's side.

The fastest thing in the world was not the Red Falcon or the Red Goose, it wasn't Jin Yulu or Nanke, and it wasn't that assassin. It was thought.

As he was thinking about these things in despair, his body was already beginning to move.

Not even he had sensed that he was moving.

He used the Yeshi Step. He didn't turn his body, nor did he calculate the position of the stars. He completely relied on his complete memorization of the several thousand positions of the Yeshi Step. Recollecting Su Li's location, he disappeared in the rain.

He knew that it would be very difficult for him to rush in front of that assassin, but he wanted to try.

Perhaps because even the world thought it was not Su Li's time to die, or perhaps the world had been moved by his intense remorse and intent to make up, or perhaps it was because his increase in cultivation had made his Yeshi Step even faster, or perhaps it was because that assassin's movement techniques and sword were not as fast as people had imagined, or perhaps it was because he had attached sword intent to his Yeshi Step...

In the rainy street, there was a light sound, a squelch.

That was the sound of a sword touching blood, the sound of a water sac being punctured.

Chen Changsheng appeared in the air in front of Su Li.

He had actually managed to use the Yeshi Step to rush in front of the assassin!

He lowered his head to his abdomen.

The assassin's sword had pierced into his abdomen and blood was slowly seeping out.

That assassin looked at Chen Changsheng, his originally apathetic eyes now showing signs of confusion.

He didn't understand how his sword had ended up stabbing into Chen Changsheng's body.

Chen Changsheng also had many things he didn't understand. For instance, an upper level Star Condensation cultivator really was very strong, actually being able to easily stab into his body. Although he hadn't stabbed too deep, it really did hurt. As he looked down at the blood slowly flowing out of his abdomen, he was somewhat perplexed and also a little gratified. Why was it that his blood wasn't giving off that scent?

The assassin couldn't determine how Chen Changsheng had been able to come back so quickly.

There was still remaining sword intent that continued to linger in the torrential rain.

The assassin felt this and then he understood that this was the final move of the Mount Li Sword Style.

The final move of the Mount Li Sword style destroyed all without discrimination and disregarded one's personal safety. It was an attack that threw away one's life.

If even life was not needed, then the situation was naturally very desperate. Because of this desperation, it was very quick.

From the Grand Examination to the battle on the snowy plains, and then again when he practiced the Blazing Sword, Chen Changsheng was very familiar with this attack.

You could look all over the world and not find someone as familiar with this attack as him.

In this most desperate moment, he had no time to attack, only enough time to use this technique.

This technique did not require a sword, only bravery.

Luckily, or perhaps unluckily, he had won his bet.

He had used the final move of the Mount Li Sword Style to place himself back in front of Su Li.

He had used his own body to block that assassin's incomparably sinister and powerful sword.

Blood slowly flowed out and then was washed away by the rain.

Silence reigned over the inundated street.

At this scene, the crowd was stunned into silence.

No one had imagined that Chen Changsheng was actually so set on protecting Su Li. They had even less inkling that he would suffer such severe injury.

All of the people here in Xunyang City had come to kill Su Li, but none of them had come to kill Chen Changsheng. He was the Principal of the Orthodox Academy. He was the Pope's martial nephew. This...was only an accident.

Was it really an accident? It really was accidental. Even Zhu Luo on that side of the street, Su Li on his horse, and even the assassin in front of him, all felt like it was a huge accident. Then what should be done next?

Soon after, another light sound could be heard in the street.

Blood spurted out as the sword left Chen Changsheng's body.

That assassin once again attacked Su Li. He was very calm, even somewhat wooden.

Chen Changsheng stepped on a star position, broke through the curtain of rain, and used the sword to help his movement technique.

He once again appeared in front of the assassin's sword.

With a squelch, the sword once again pierced into his abdomen, causing blood to flow out.

His face was pale, but there were also two balls of red.

It was a color brought about by the pain and the loss of blood, and also dedication and will mingling together into bravery.

The assassin slightly lowered his head and quietly looked at him. He said nothing, but the meaning in his eyes was exceptionally clear: 'You will die.'

Chen Changsheng was heavily wounded and was incapable of speaking. As the rain streamed down his face, his meaning was also very clear: 'So what?'

Some people choose to die to save others, like Chen Changsheng.

Some people choose to die to kill others, like Liang Xiaoxiao.

On their journey of tens of thousands of li southward, from the snowy plains in the land of demons to Tianliang County, Chen Changsheng and Su Li had encountered many things concerning several places.

The place Chen Changsheng was most concerned about was the capital, and the place Su Li was most worried about was Mount Li.

Mount Li was also very worried about Su Li, but there were many troublesome problems that it was being forced to confront. Qiushan Jun was heavily injured and in a coma, as was Qi Jian that had just been brought back. And then, many people came to the mountain. In the capital, there were also many people concerned about Chen Changsheng. Every day, Luoluo would stand on the roof of the Hall of Pure Virtue, watching the setting sun. Her elegant and small face was filled with worry and grief. The Orthodox Academy was quiet as a grave. Every day, Xuanyuan Po would go to the Mausoleum of Books to see if Tang Thirty-Six had come out. The great banyan tree by the lake was a compelling spring green, but no one came to visit it.

The matters concerning the Garden of Zhou had already come to an end, but its aftershocks continued to reverberate far and wide. As people left Hanqiu City, they carried the news of what had happened in the Garden of Zhou as well as the shocking events that had occurred outside of it to the entire continent—the demons had used some mysterious method to infiltrate the Garden of Zhou and then forcefully closed the gate. Within, countless scenes of bloody carnage had been stirred up. Afterwards, for some unknown

reason, the Garden of Zhou suddenly collapsed and was probably already destroyed at this point. Many extremely talented young cultivators had died within. What shocked people the most was that Chen Changsheng had gone missing in the Garden of Zhou and his ultimate fate was still unknown.

The current Chen Changsheng had long since ceased to be that young Daoist from Xining Village's old temple. He was the previous year's Grand Examination's first rank of the first banner. In the Mausoleum of Books, he had led the sky to be filled with starlight and helped dozens of his peers to successfully break through into the next realm. He was the Pope's most favored young genius and also the youngest Principal of the Orthodox Academy in history.

To not know whether a person like this was alive or dead, for a person like this to be unaccounted for, it was natural for this to attract the shocked gazes of the entire continent. The only matter that was its equal was Liang Xiaoxiao's final accusation on the verge of his death. Although Liang Xiaoxiao had not spoken clearly before he died, everyone present knew what he had wanted to say...Chen Changsheng, Qi Jian and Zhexiu were colluding with the demons.

If it were anyone else making this accusation, it would only provoke ridicule, but Liang Xiaoxiao was a disciple of Mount Li, a brilliant and famous member of the Divine Kingdom's Seven Laws. He had no reason to falsely accuse his own junior brother Qi Jian. Most importantly...Liang Xiaoxiao was dead.

He had died under the final move of the Mount Li Sword Style.

And the dead would not lie.

"A dead person can't even say anything, so naturally they can't lie. The problem lies in the fact that when the Mount Li disciple said those words, he wasn't dead yet. So for what reason should we believe he didn't lie?"

"But Liang Xiaoxiao was heavily wounded at the time, not far from death. Those words were tantamount to his last will."

Zhou Tong was expressionless. Under the light of the oil lamp, his two eyebrows were like two lines of ink. "And his last will is absolutely trustworthy? Then my Department for Purging Officials will have it much easier when handling cases now. If there's some big figure that thinks my evidence is not enough, I'll arrange to have one of his nephews commit suicide. As long as he leaves behind a few words before he dies, it'll be okay, right?"

"I never knew that Lord Zhou Tong valued evidence so highly," Mo Yu looked at him and said. She had never liked Zhou Tong, something the entire capital was well aware of. Of course, this did not affect their cooperation in the politics of the court. As the Divine Empress's two most reliable arms in the Imperial Court, they absolutely had to cooperate well.

"The important point is that no one believes that Chen Changsheng would collaborate with the demons, so I need evidence."

Zhou Tong's expression was unchanging as he calmly said, "In

fact, if that Mount Li disciple hadn't died, if it was just purely off Zhuang Huanyu's accusation, do you really think the Li Palace would agree to hand over Zhexiu to me?"

After a moment of silence, Mo Yu asked, "What was the result of the interrogation?"

"He didn't say a single word. Naturally, there was no result."

Zhou Tong impassively said, "I will continue to interrogate him for a month. By that time, if he still won't admit that Chen Changsheng is collaborating with the demons, then...I will admit that he is saying the truth."

Hearing these words, Mo Yu felt a burst of cold and her face paled somewhat.

For how many days had Zhexiu been imprisoned? If he was to be jailed for another month, would he be able to survive? It must be known that he was not imprisoned in the imperial prison, nor was he in the prison of the Ministry of Justice, but rather he was jailed in that most sinister and awful legendary Zhou Prison. No one could hold on in the Zhou Prison for that long. Even if he could, it was still too cruel.

So cruel...that even Zhou Tong himself felt a little sympathy for that wolf youth.